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(54) **SYSTEM, METHOD AND COMPUTER PROGRAM PRODUCT FOR A COLLABORATIVE DECISION PLATFORM**

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G06F 17/00 (2006.01)
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(58) **Field of Classification Search** 706/46
See application file for complete search history.

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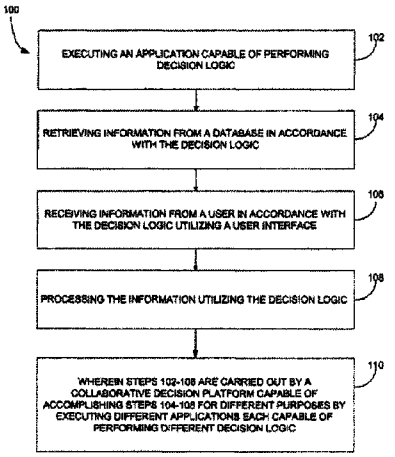
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A decision making system, method and computer program product are provided. Initially, a plurality of attributes is defined. Thereafter, first information regarding the attributes is received from a receiving business. Second information is then received regarding proposed products or services in terms of the attributes. Such second information is received from a supplying business. In use, a decision process is executed based on the first information and the second information.

760 Claims, 47 Drawing Sheets



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7,398,244	B1	7/2008	Keith	705/37
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RE40,576	E	11/2008	Goodwin, III	709/232
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"EC Enterprise Controlling."
The IDoc Interface Concept.
"FI Financial Accounting."
"IM Investment Management."
"PM Plant Maintenance."
"General Information," EDI (Electronic Data Interchange).
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"SAP Open Information Warehouse Frontend for Microsoft Excel."
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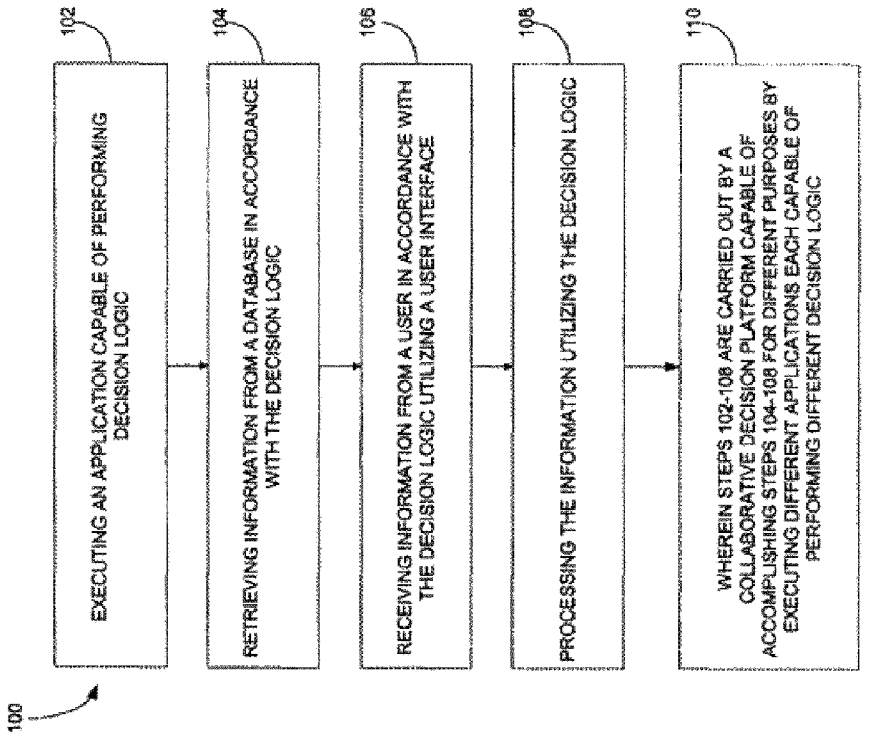

100
102
EXECUTING AN APPLICATION CAPABLE OF PERFORMING DECISION LOGIC
104
RETRIEVING INFORMATION FROM A DATABASE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DECISION LOGIC
106
RECEIVING INFORMATION FROM A USER IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DECISION LOGIC UTILIZING A USER INTERFACE
108
PROCESSING THE INFORMATION UTILIZING THE DECISION LOGIC
110
WHEREIN STEPS 102-108 ARE CARRIED OUT BY A COLLABORATIVE DECISION PLATFORM CAPABLE OF ACCOMPLISHING STEPS 104-108 FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES BY EXECUTING DIFFERENT APPLICATIONS EACH CAPABLE OF PERFORMING DIFFERENT DECISION LOGIC

Fig. 1

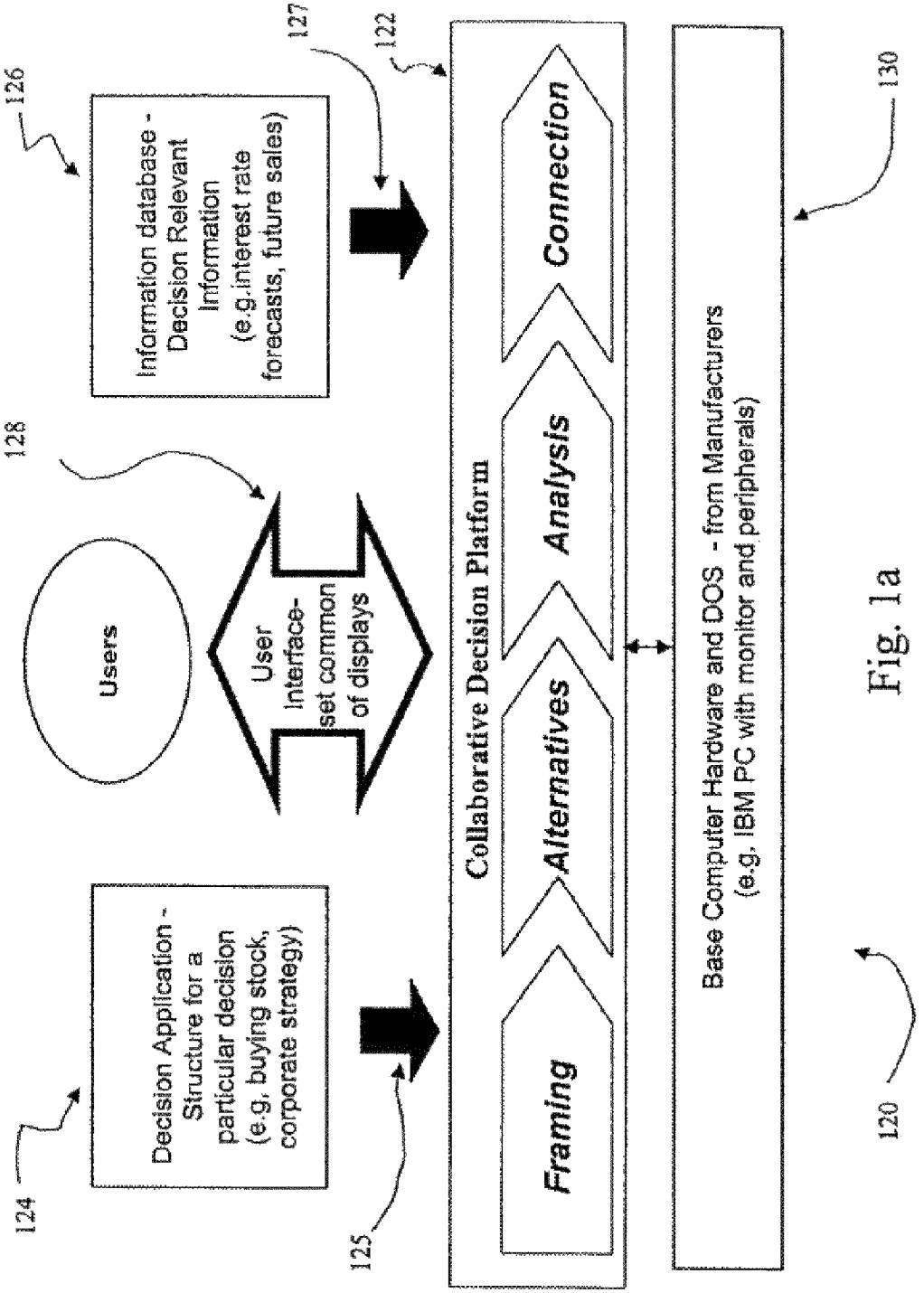

126
Information database - Decision Relevant Information (e.g.interest rate forecasts, future sales)
127
122
128
Users
User Interface- set common of displays
Collaborative Decision Platform
Framing
Alternatives
Analysis
Connection
Base Computer Hardware and DOS - from Manufacturers (e.g. IBM PC with monitor and peripherals)
130
124
Decision Application - Structure for a particular decision (e.g. buying stock, corporate strategy)
125
120

Fig. 1a

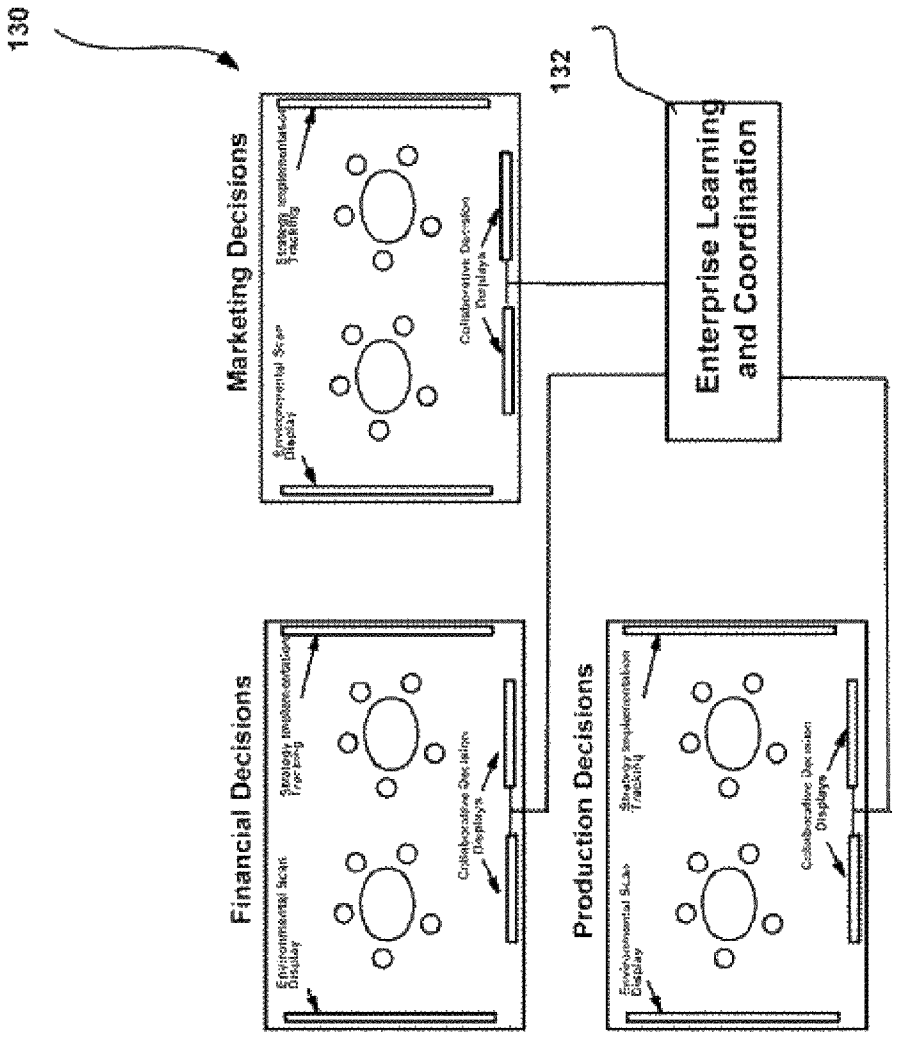

130
132
Marketing Decisions
Financial Decisions
Production Decisions
Enterprise Learning and Coordination

Fig. 1b

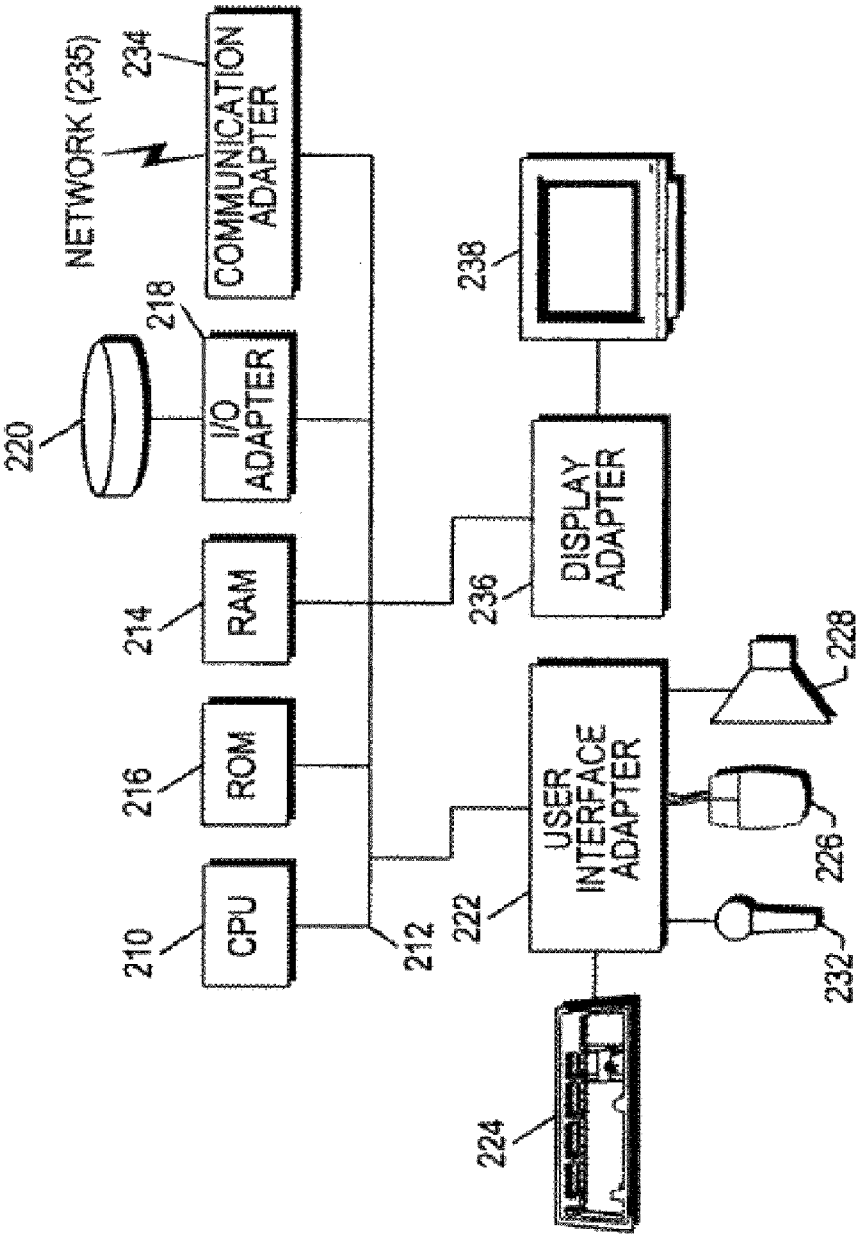
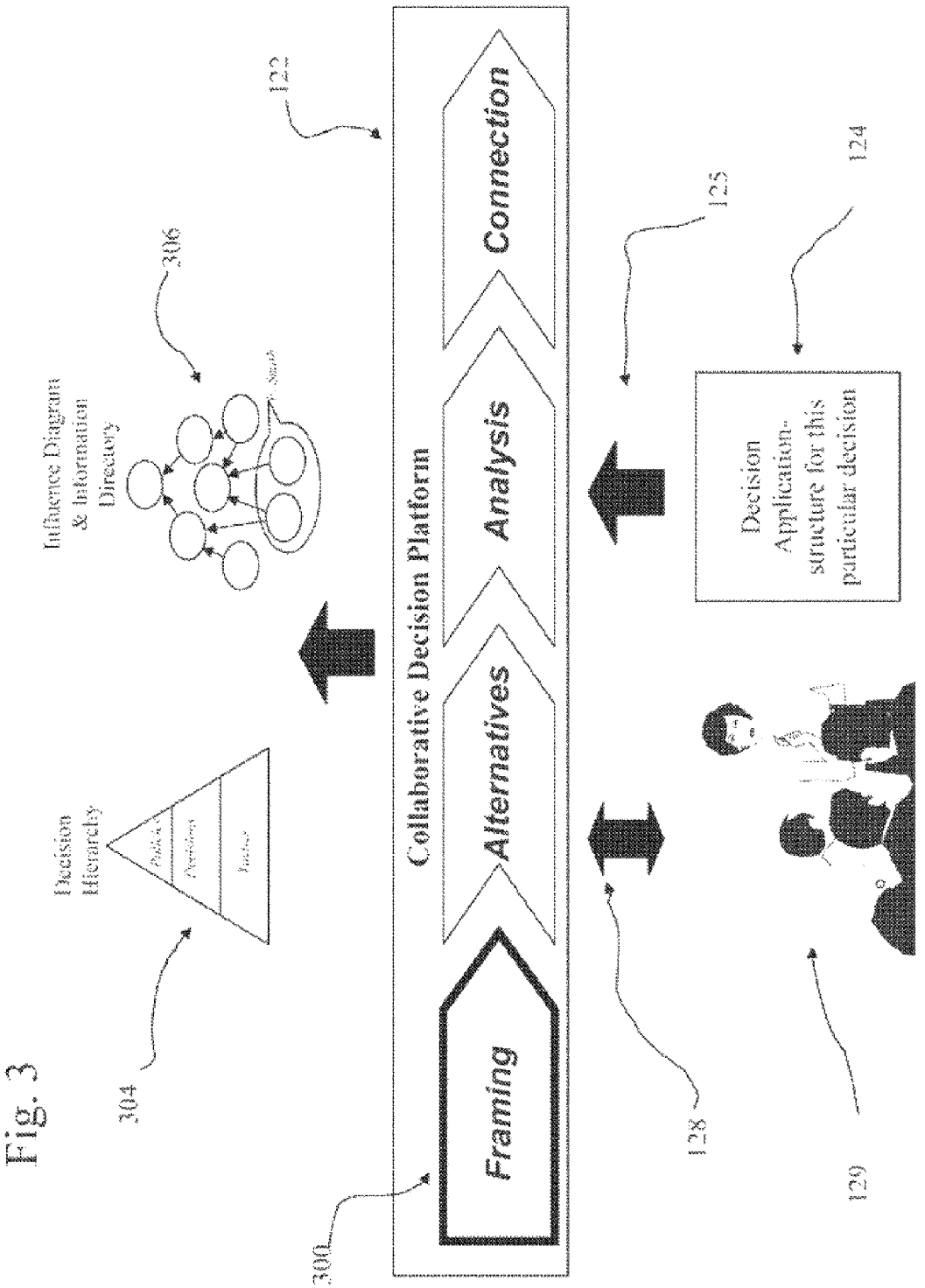

NETWORK (235)
234
COMMUNICATION ADAPTER
218
I/O ADAPTER
220
214
RAM
216
ROM
210
CPU
212
238
DISPLAY ADAPTER
236
USER INTERFACE ADAPTER
222
228
226
232
224

Fig. 2

Fig. 3


Framing
Alternatives
Analysis
Connection
Collaborative Decision Platform
300
122
306
Influence Diagram & Information Directory
304
Decision Hierarchy
125
124
Decision Application-structure for this particular decision
128
129

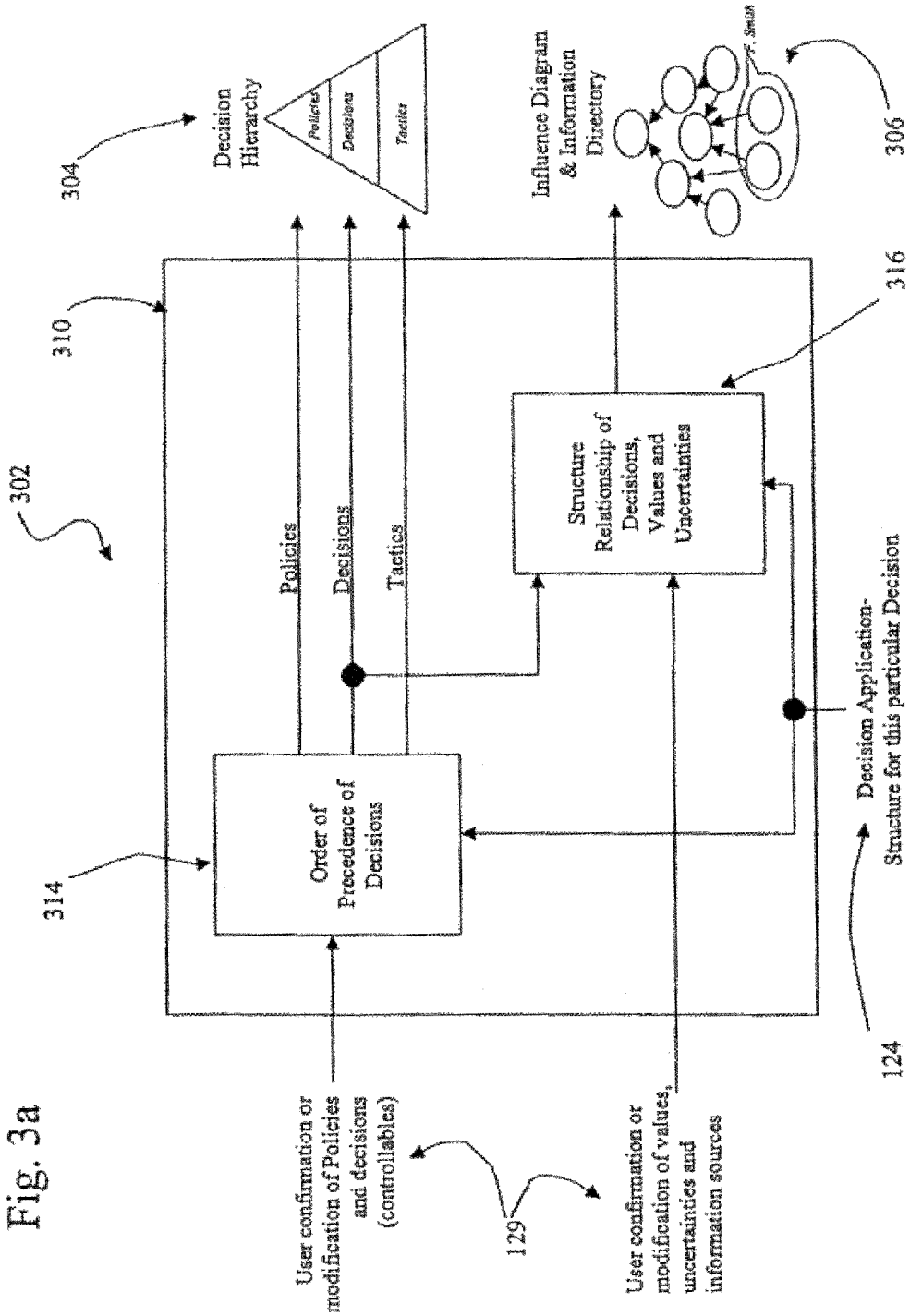
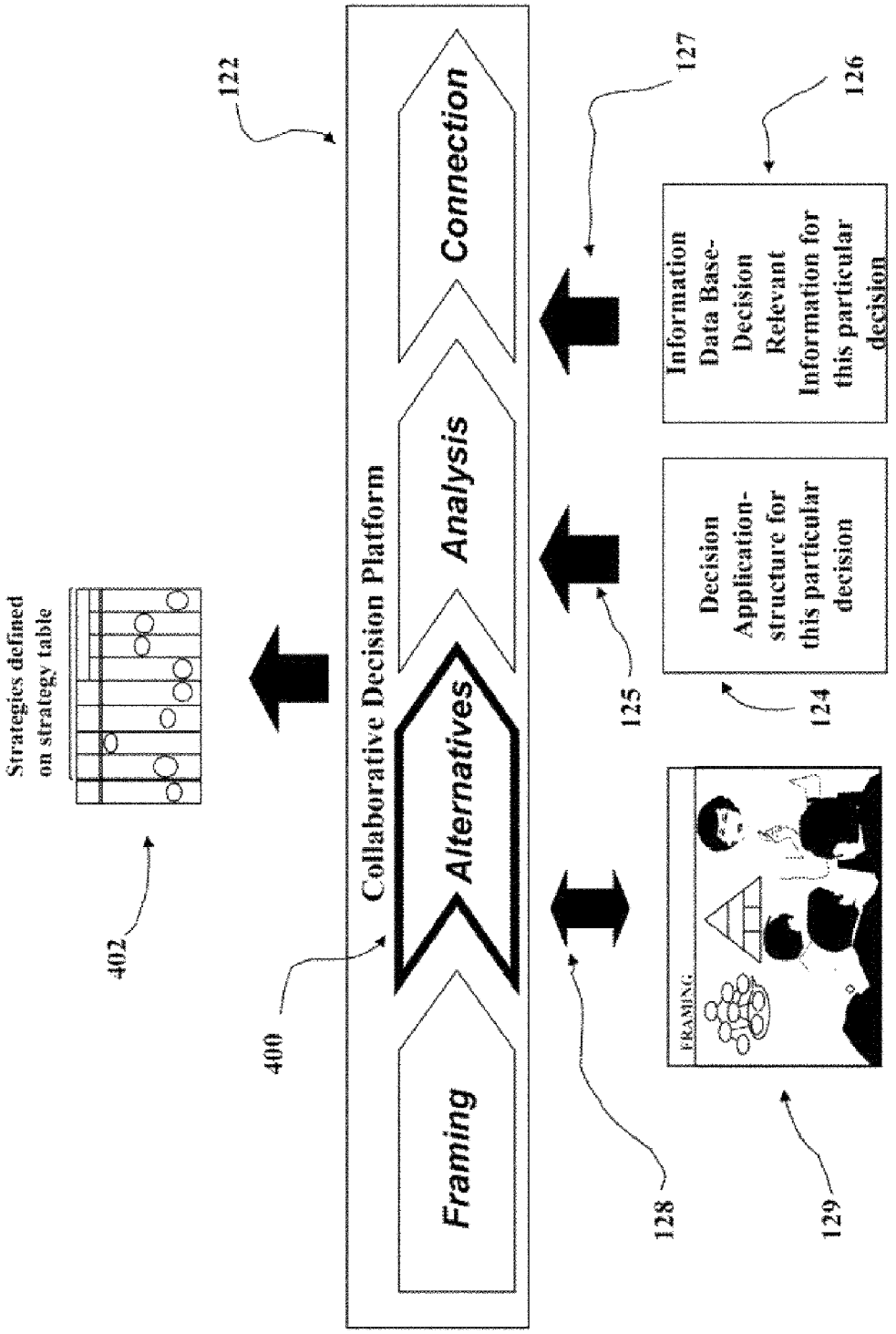

302
304
Decision Hierarchy
Policies
Decisions
Tactics
306
Influence Diagram & Information Directory
310
316
Structure Relationship of Decisions, Values and Uncertainties
Policies
Decisions
Tactics
314
Order of Precedence of Decisions
Decision Application-Structure for this particular Decision
124
User confirmation or modification of Policies and decisions (controllables)
129
User confirmation or modification of values, uncertainties and information sources

Fig. 3a

Fig. 4


122
Collaborative Decision Platform
Framing
Alternatives
Analysis
Connection
400
402
Strategies defined on strategy table
128
129
125
124
Decision Application-structure for this particular decision
127
126
Information Data Base-Decision Relevant Information for this particular decision
FRAMING

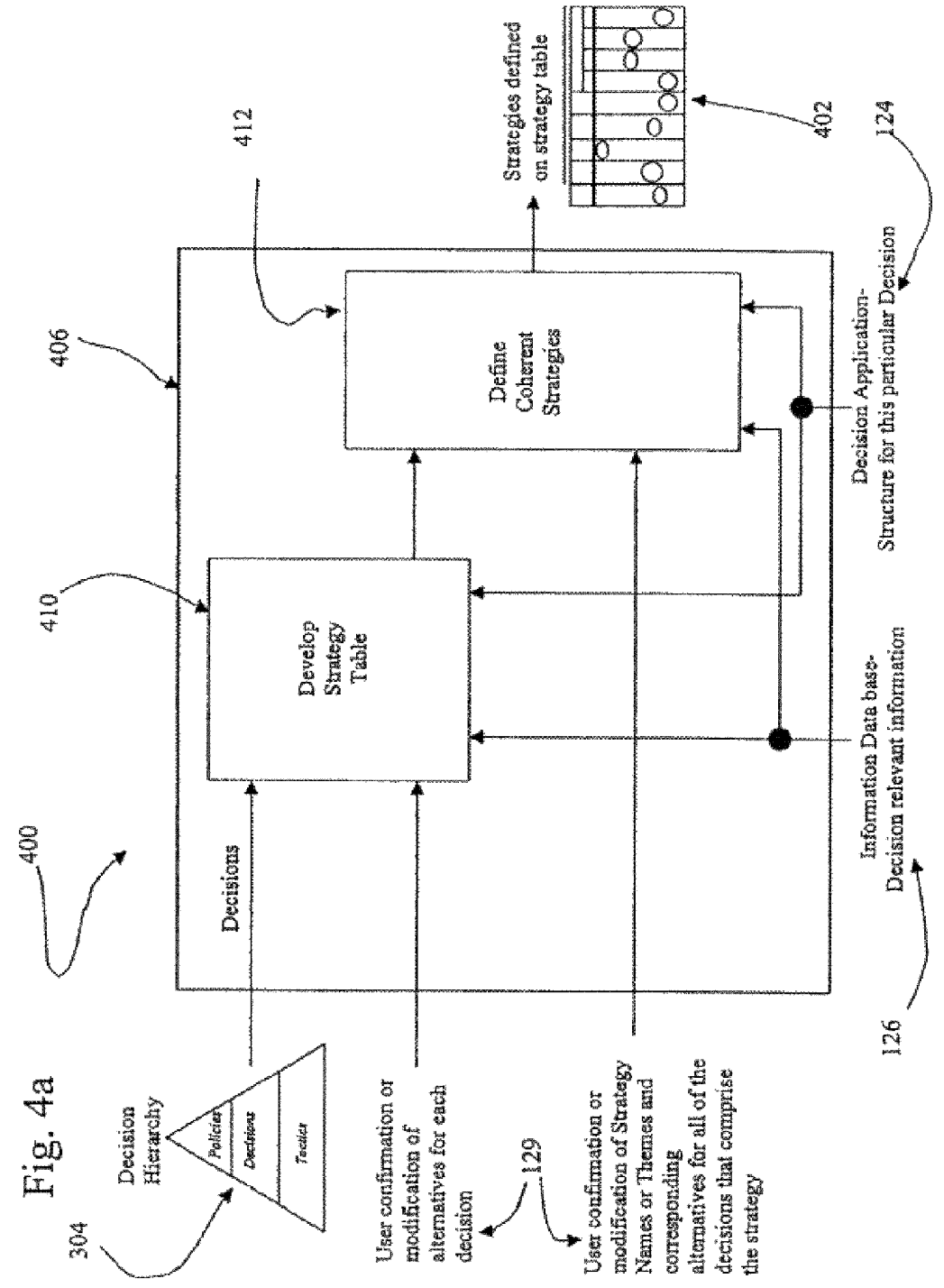
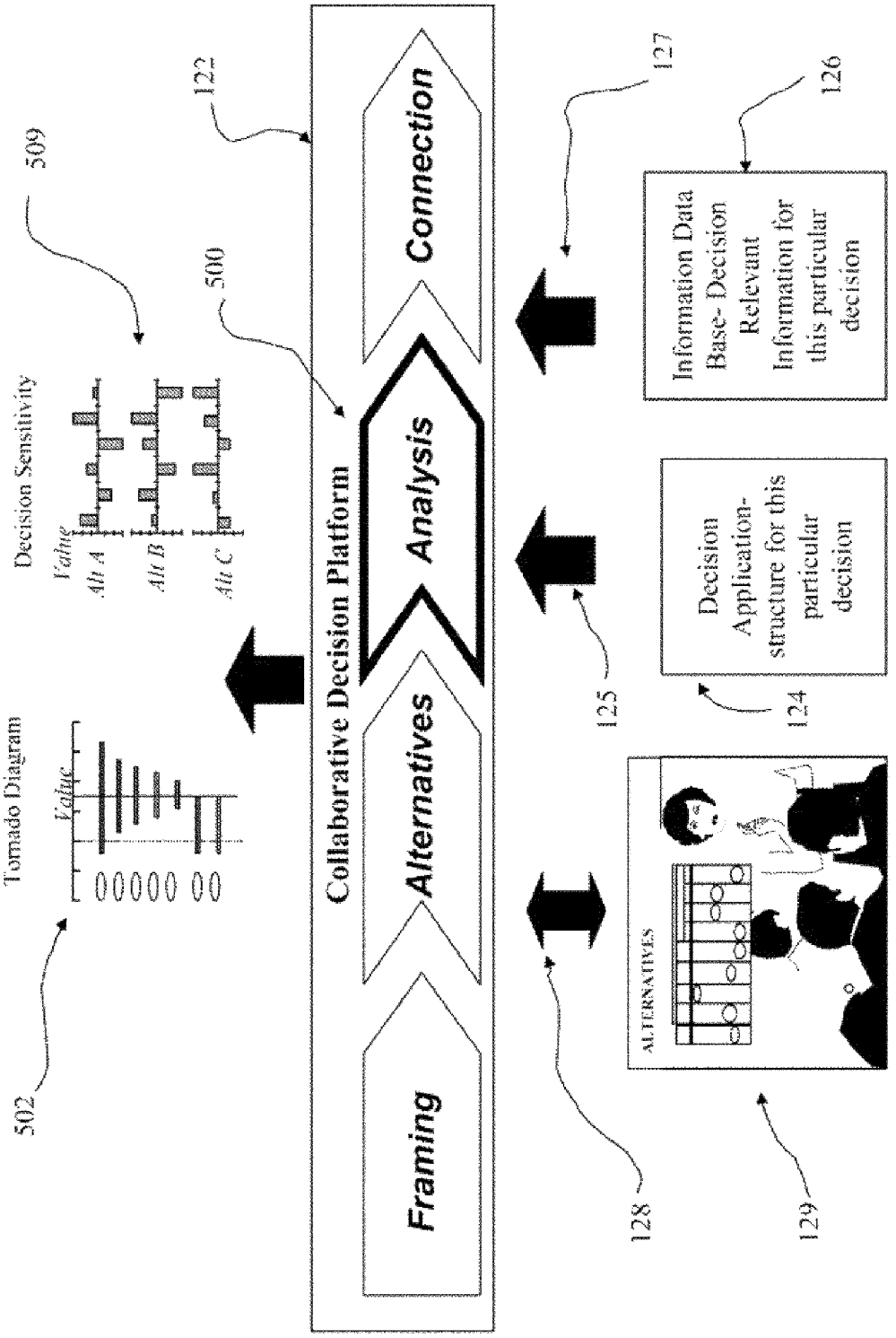

400
406
412
410
Define Coherent Strategies
Develop Strategy Table
Decisions
Strategies defined on strategy table
402
124
Decision Application-Structure for this particular Decision
Information Data base-Decision relevant information
126
Decision Hierarchy
304
User confirmation or modification of alternatives for each decision
129
User confirmation or modification of Strategy Names or Themes and corresponding alternatives for all of the decisions that comprise the strategy

Fig. 4a

Fig. 5


Tornado Diagram
Value
502
Decision Sensitivity
Value
Alt A
Alt B
Alt C
509
500
122
Collaborative Decision Platform
Framing
Alternatives
Analysis
Connection
127
126
Information Data Base- Decision Relevant Information for this particular decision
125
Decision Application-structure for this particular decision
124
ALTERNATIVES
128
129

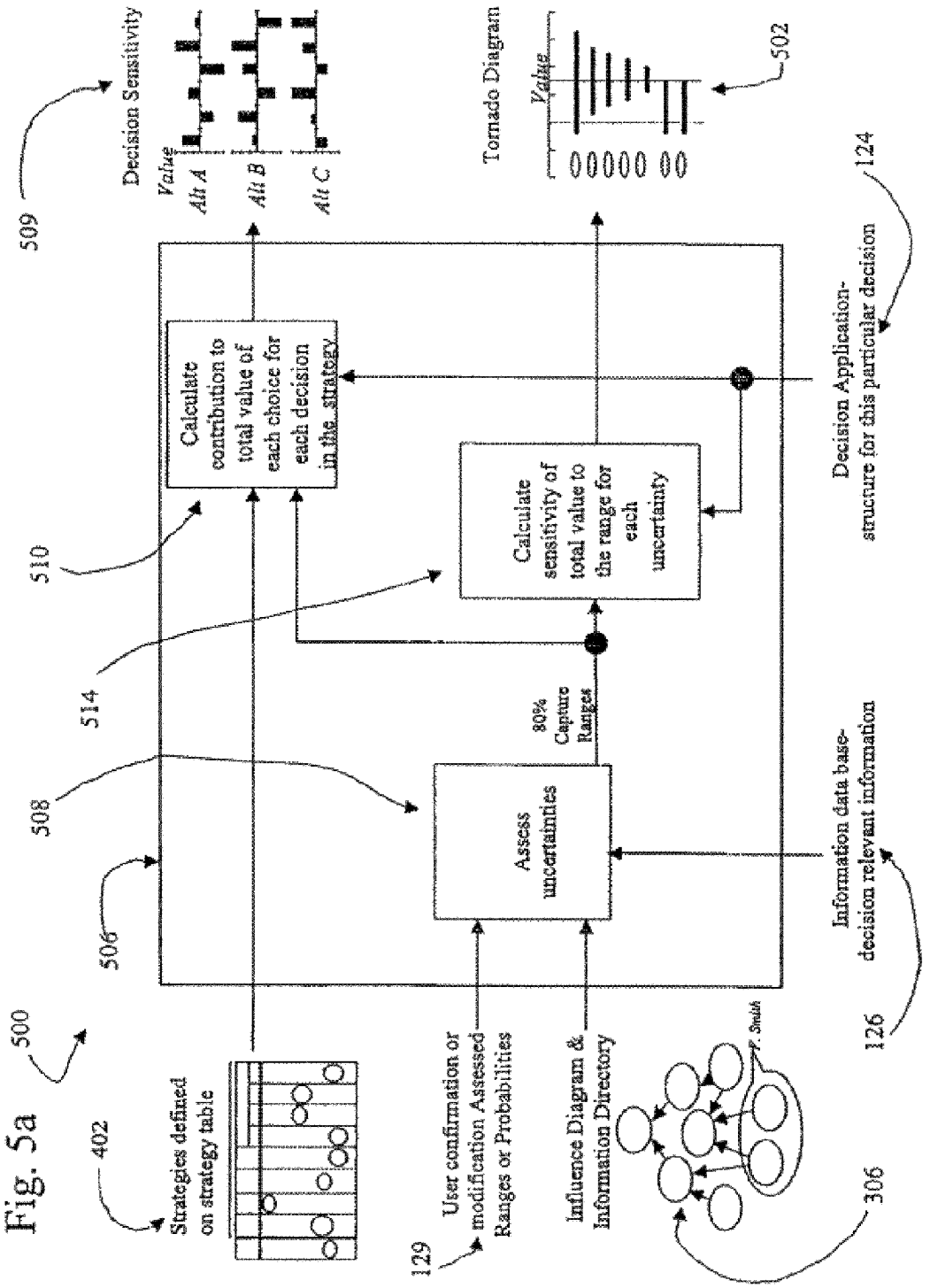


Fig. 5a
500
402
Strategies defined on strategy table
129
User confirmation or modification Assessed Ranges or Probabilities
Influence Diagram & Information Directory
306
126
Information data base-decision relevant information
506
508
514
510
Assess uncertainties
80% Capture Ranges
Calculate sensitivity of total value to the range for each uncertainty
Calculate contribution to total value of each choice for each decision in the strategy
Decision Application-structure for this particular decision
124
Tornado Diagram
Value
502
Decision Sensitivity
Value
Alt A
Alt B
Alt C
509

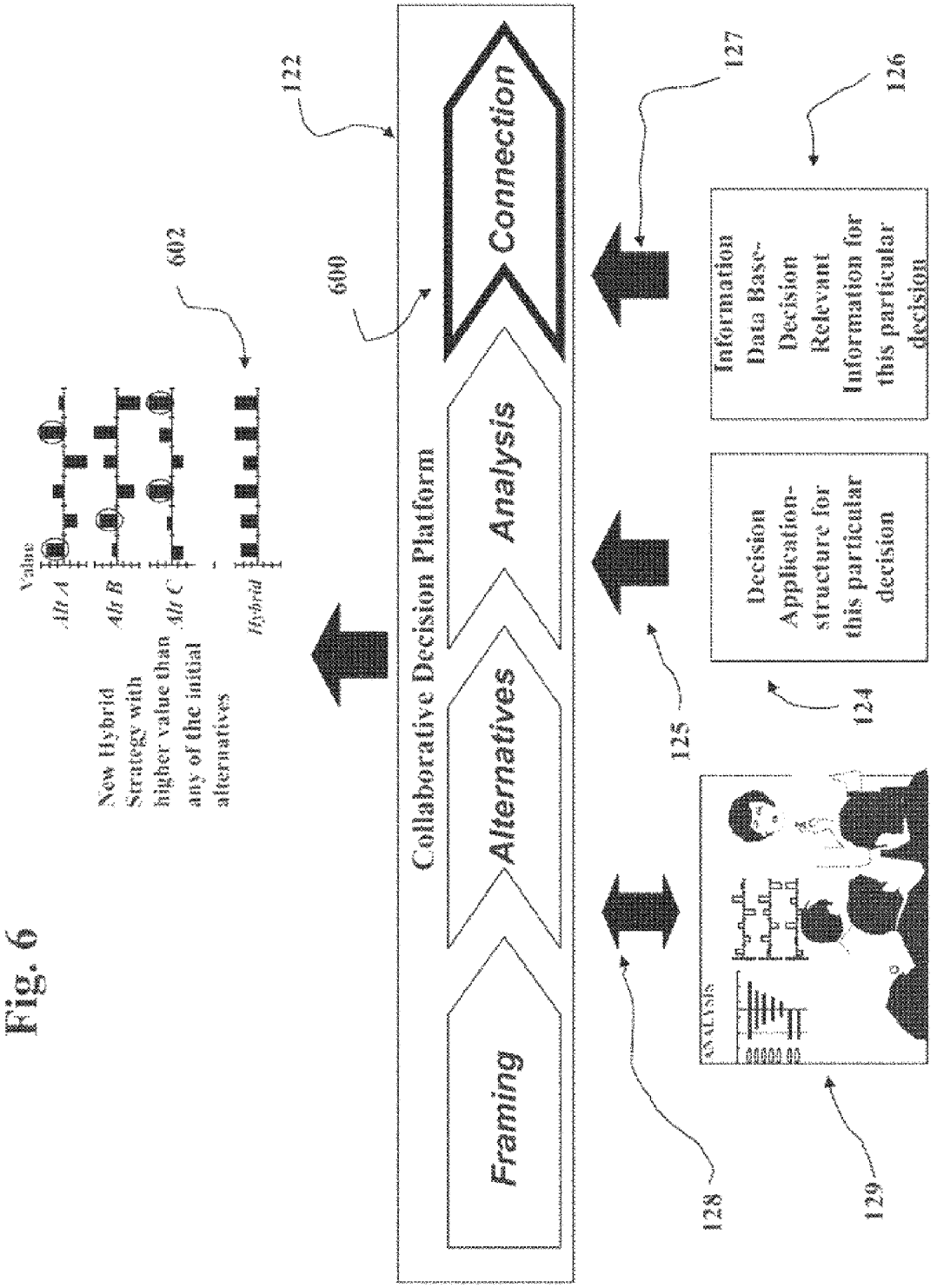

Framing
Alternatives
Analysis
Connection
Collaborative Decision Platform
122
600
602
Value
Alt A
Alt B
Alt C
Hybrid
New Hybrid Strategy with higher value than any of the initial alternatives
125
124
127
126
Decision Application-structure for this particular decision
Information Data Base-Decision Relevant Information for this particular decision
128
129

Fig. 6

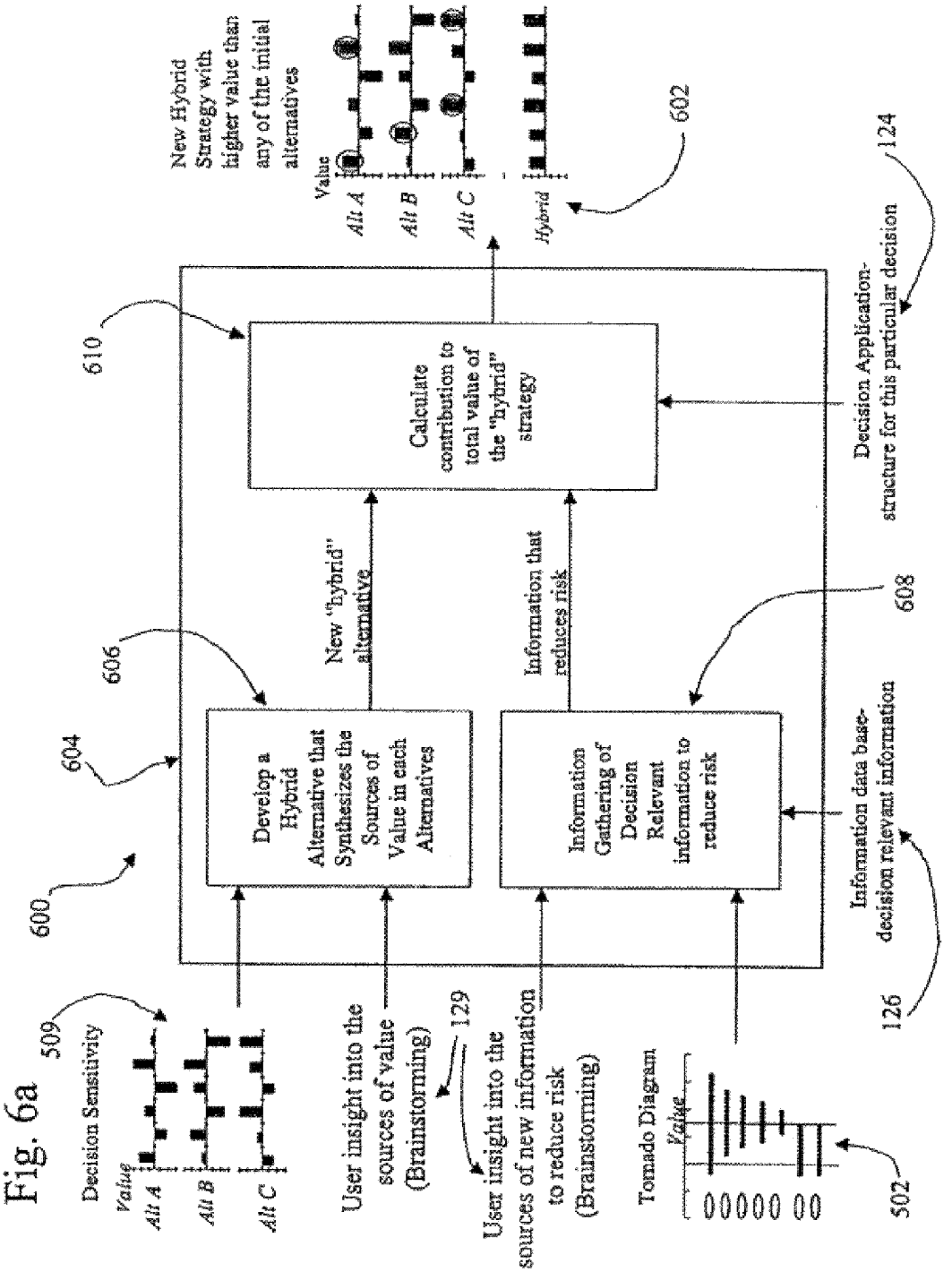

600
604
606
610
602
608
124
126
129
502
509
Develop a Hybrid Alternative that Synthesizes the Sources of Value in each Alternatives
Information Gathering of Decision Relevant information to reduce risk
Calculate contribution to total value of the "hybrid" strategy
New "hybrid" alternative
Information that reduces risk
Decision Application-structure for this particular decision
Information data base-decision relevant information
New Hybrid Strategy with higher value than any of the initial alternatives
Value
Alt A
Alt B
Alt C
Hybrid
Decision Sensitivity
Value
Alt A
Alt B
Alt C
User insight into the sources of value (Brainstorming)
User insight into the sources of new information to reduce risk (Brainstorming)
Tornado Diagram
Value

Fig. 6a

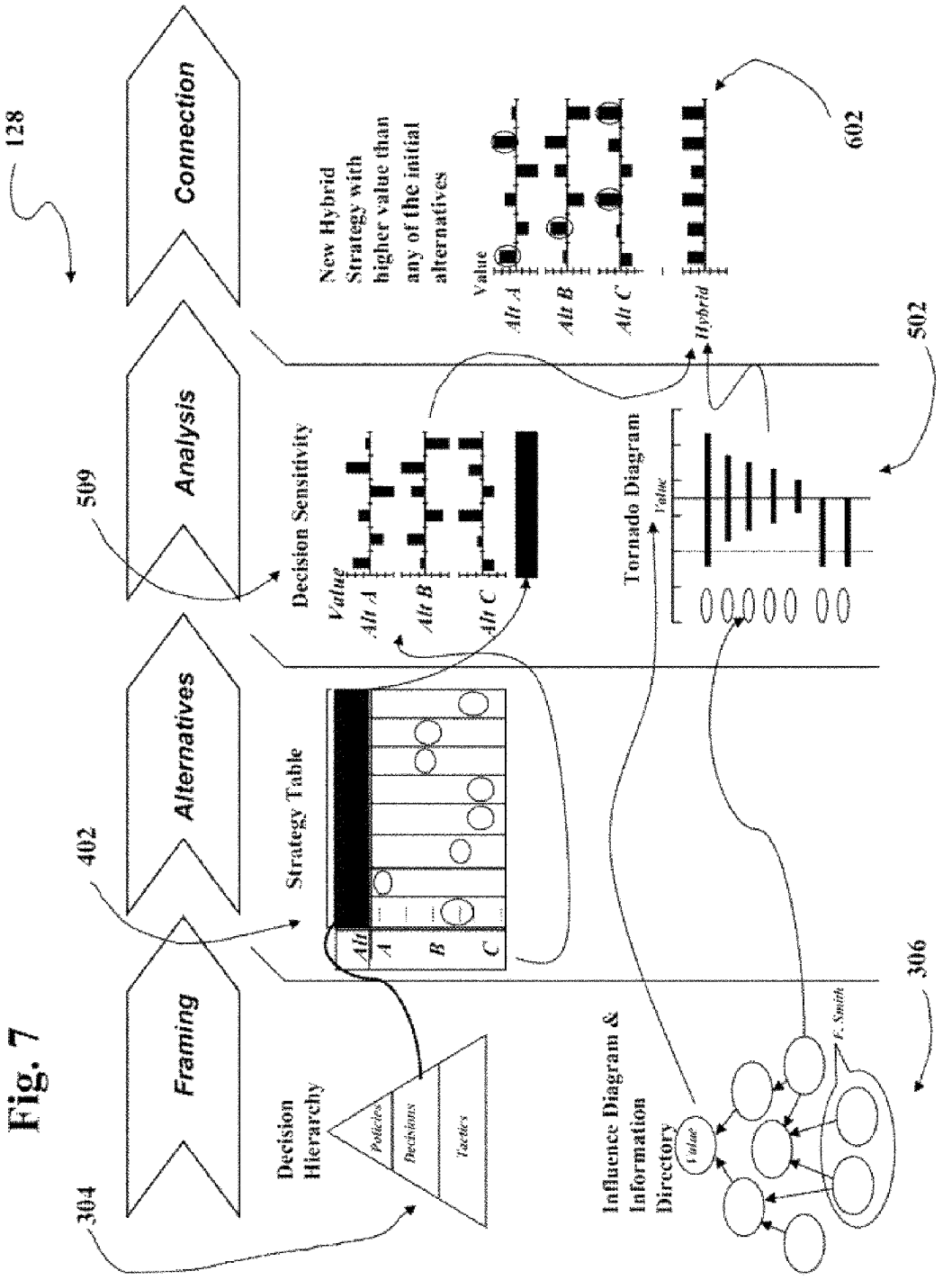

128
Framing
Alternatives
Analysis
Connection
304
402
509
602
502
306
Decision Hierarchy
Policies
Decisions
Tactics
Strategy Table
Alt
A
B
C
Decision Sensitivity
Value
Alt A
Alt B
Alt C
New Hybrid Strategy with higher value than any of the initial alternatives
Value
Alt A
Alt B
Alt C
Hybrid
Tornado Diagram
Value
Influence Diagram & Information Directory
Value
F. Smith

Fig. 7

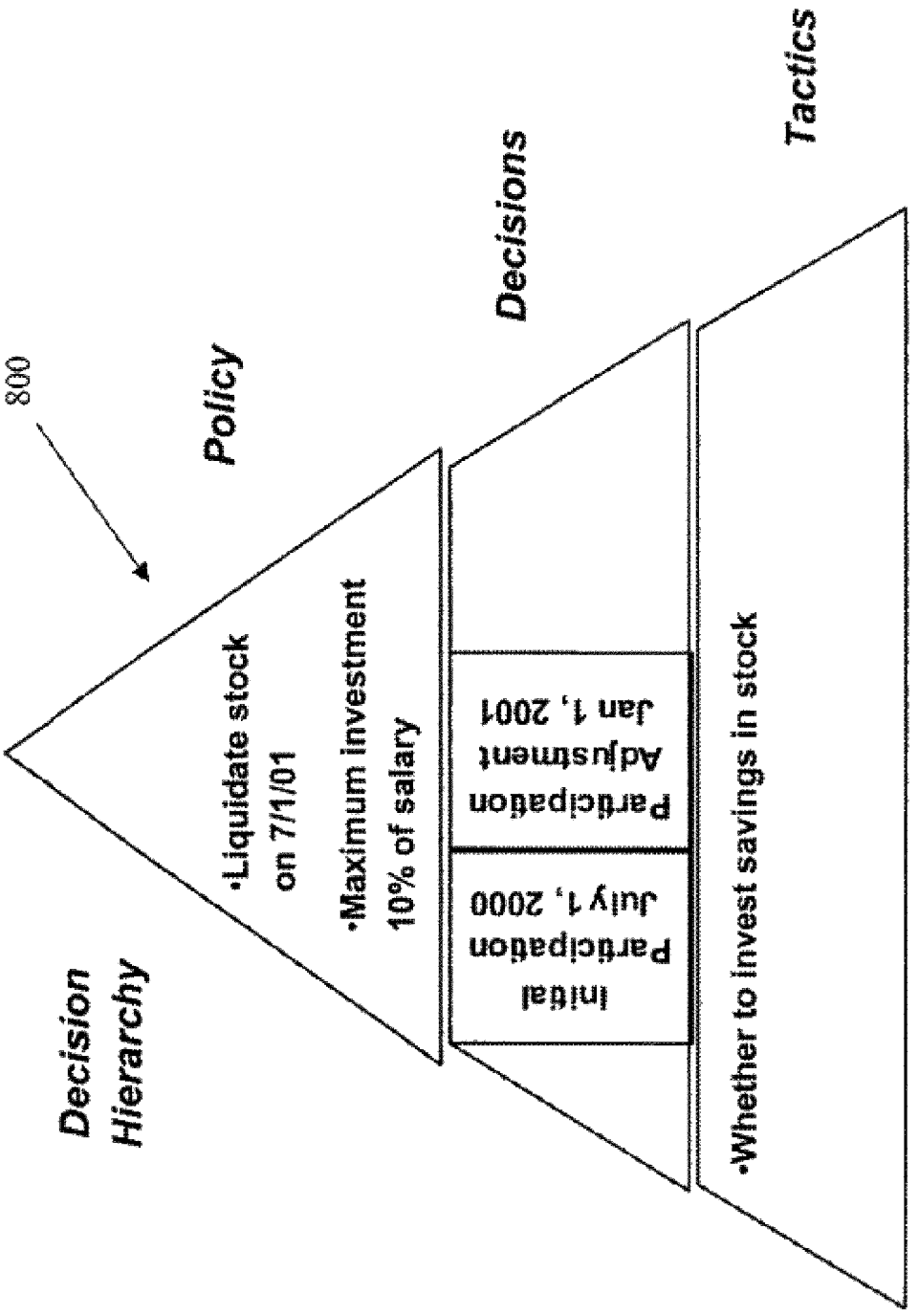

800
Decision Hierarchy
Policy
Decisions
Tactics
•Liquidate stock on 7/1/01
•Maximum investment 10% of salary
Initial Participation July 1, 2000
Participation Adjustment Jan 1, 2001
•Whether to invest savings in stock

Fig. 8a

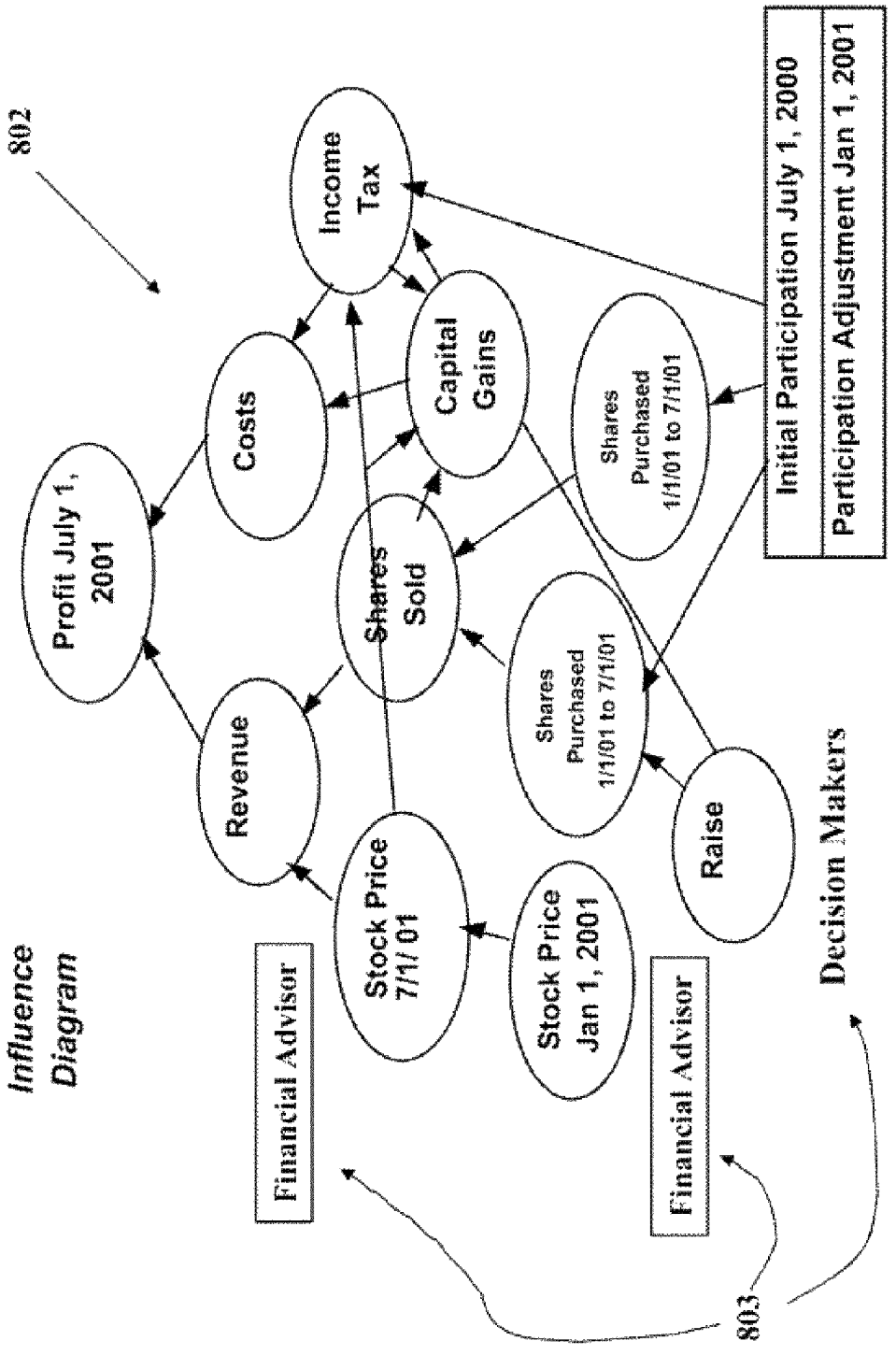

802
Influence Diagram
Profit July 1, 2001
Costs
Income Tax
Capital Gains
Shares Sold
Revenue
Stock Price 7/1/ 01
Stock Price Jan 1, 2001
Shares Purchased 1/1/01 to 7/1/01
Shares Purchased 1/1/01 to 7/1/01
Raise
Initial Participation July 1, 2000
Participation Adjustment Jan 1, 2001
Financial Advisor
Financial Advisor
Decision Makers
803

Fig. 8b

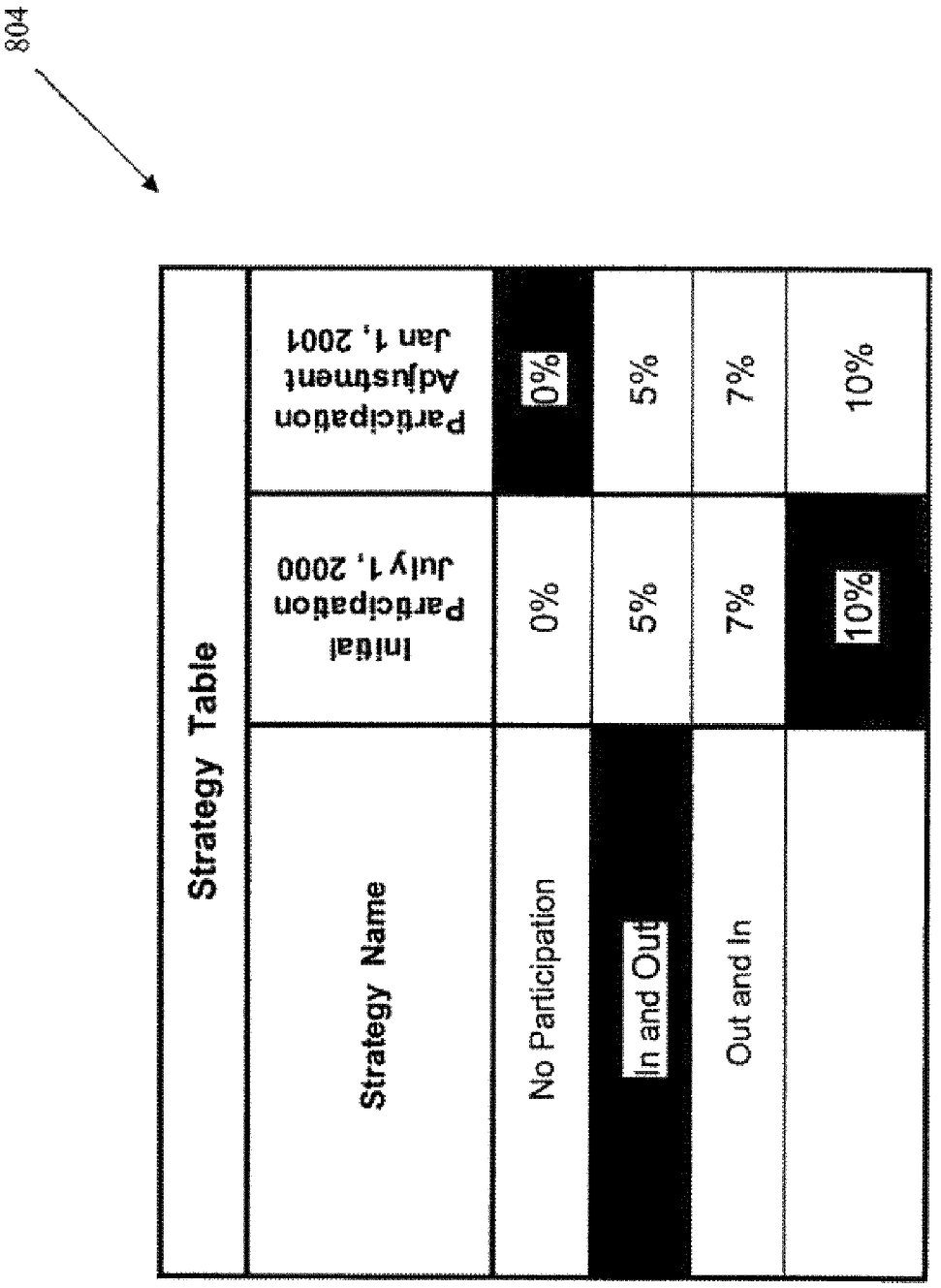

804
Strategy Table
Strategy Name
Initial Participation July 1, 2000
Participation Adjustment Jan 1, 2001
No Participation
0%
0%
In and Out
5%
5%
Out and In
7%
7%
10%
10%

Fig. 8c

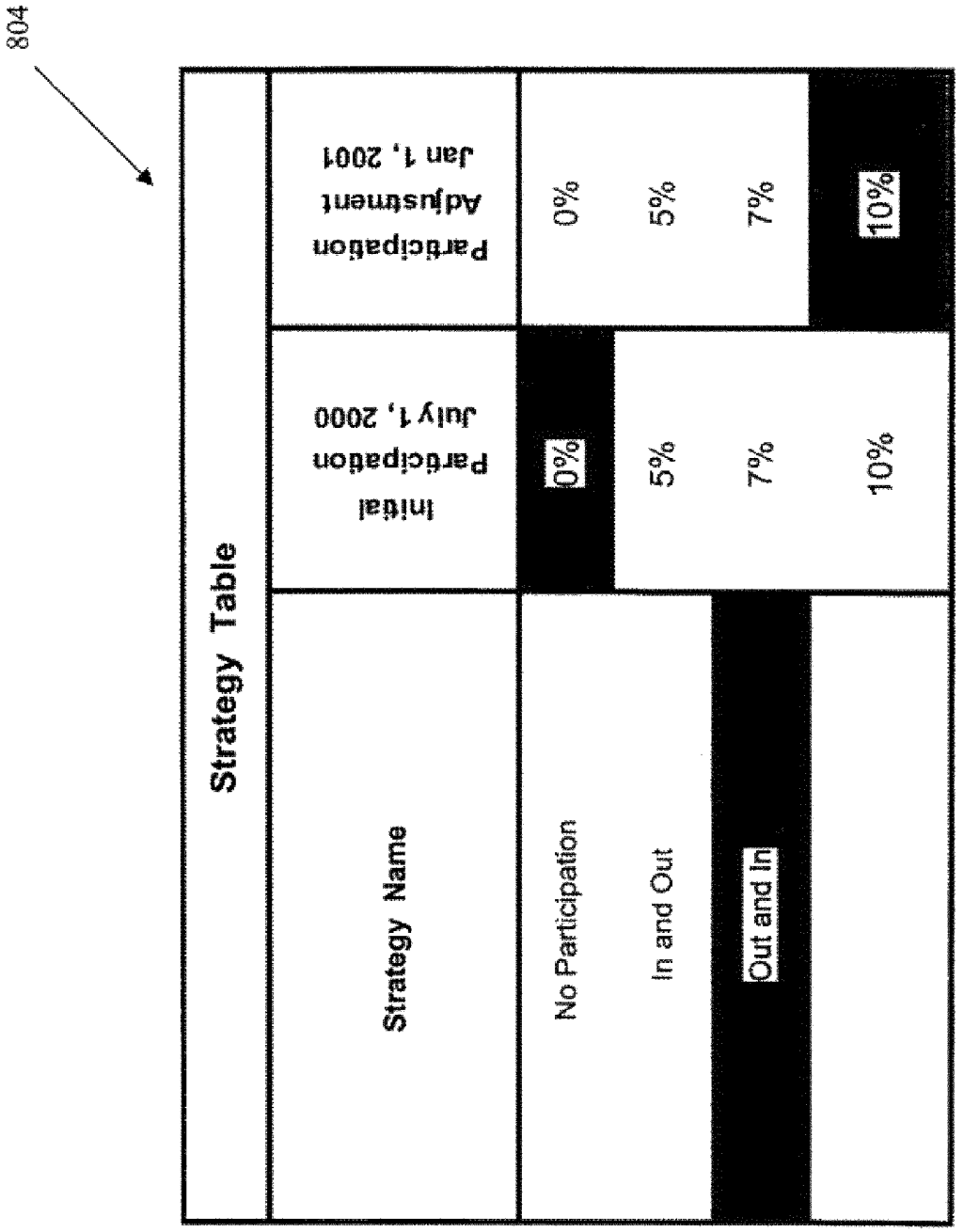

804
Strategy Table
Strategy Name
No Participation
In and Out
Out and In
Initial Participation July 1, 2000
0%
5%
7%
10%
Participation Adjustment Jan 1, 2001
0%
5%
7%
10%

Fig. 8d

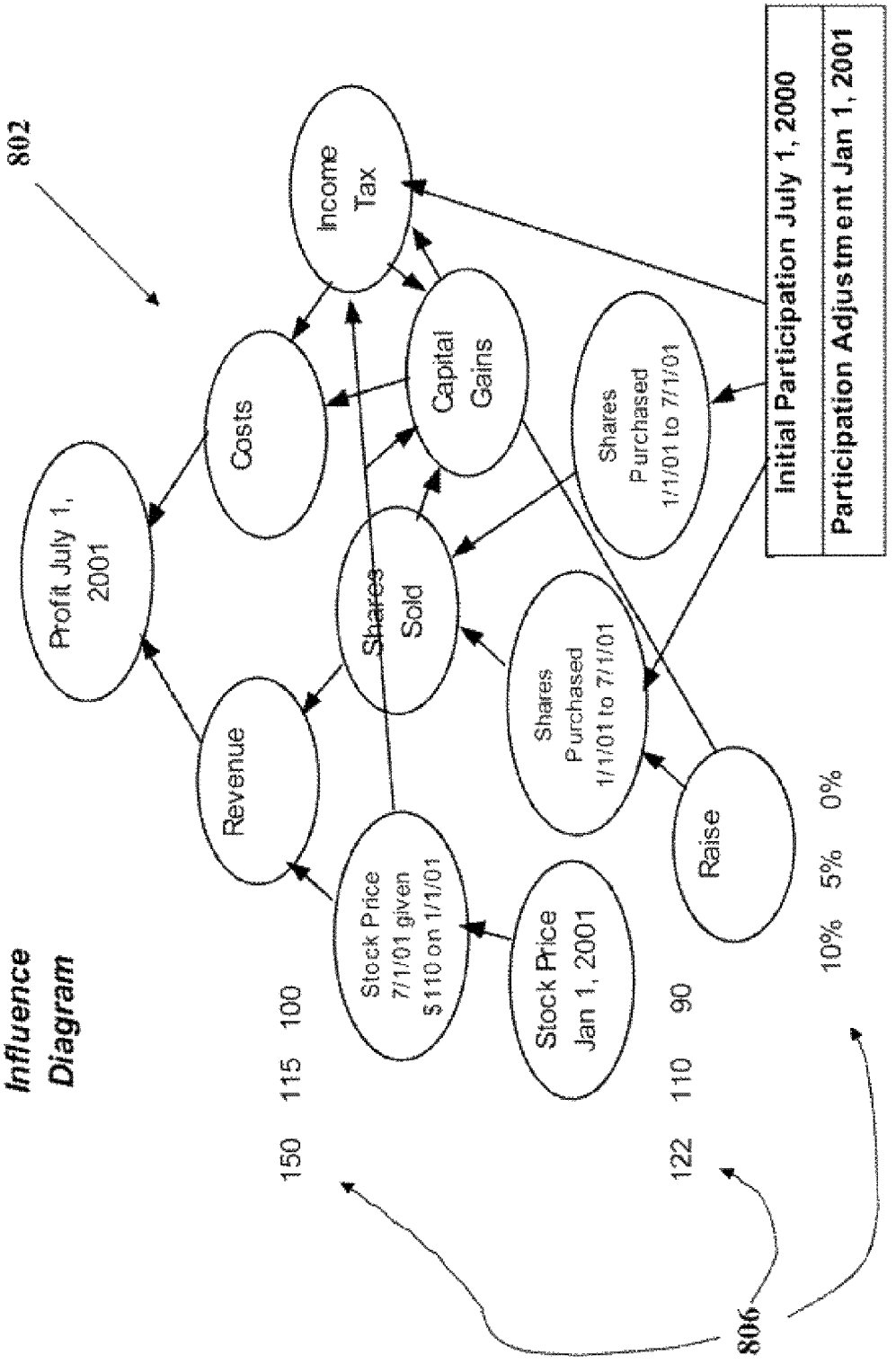

802
Influence Diagram
Profit July 1, 2001
Costs
Income Tax
Capital Gains
Shares Purchased 1/1/01 to 7/1/01
Initial Participation July 1, 2000
Participation Adjustment Jan 1, 2001
Shares Sold
Revenue
Shares Purchased 1/1/01 to 7/1/01
Stock Price 7/1/01 given $110 on 1/1/01
Stock Price Jan 1, 2001
Raise
150 115 100
122 110 90
10% 5% 0%
806

Fig. 8e

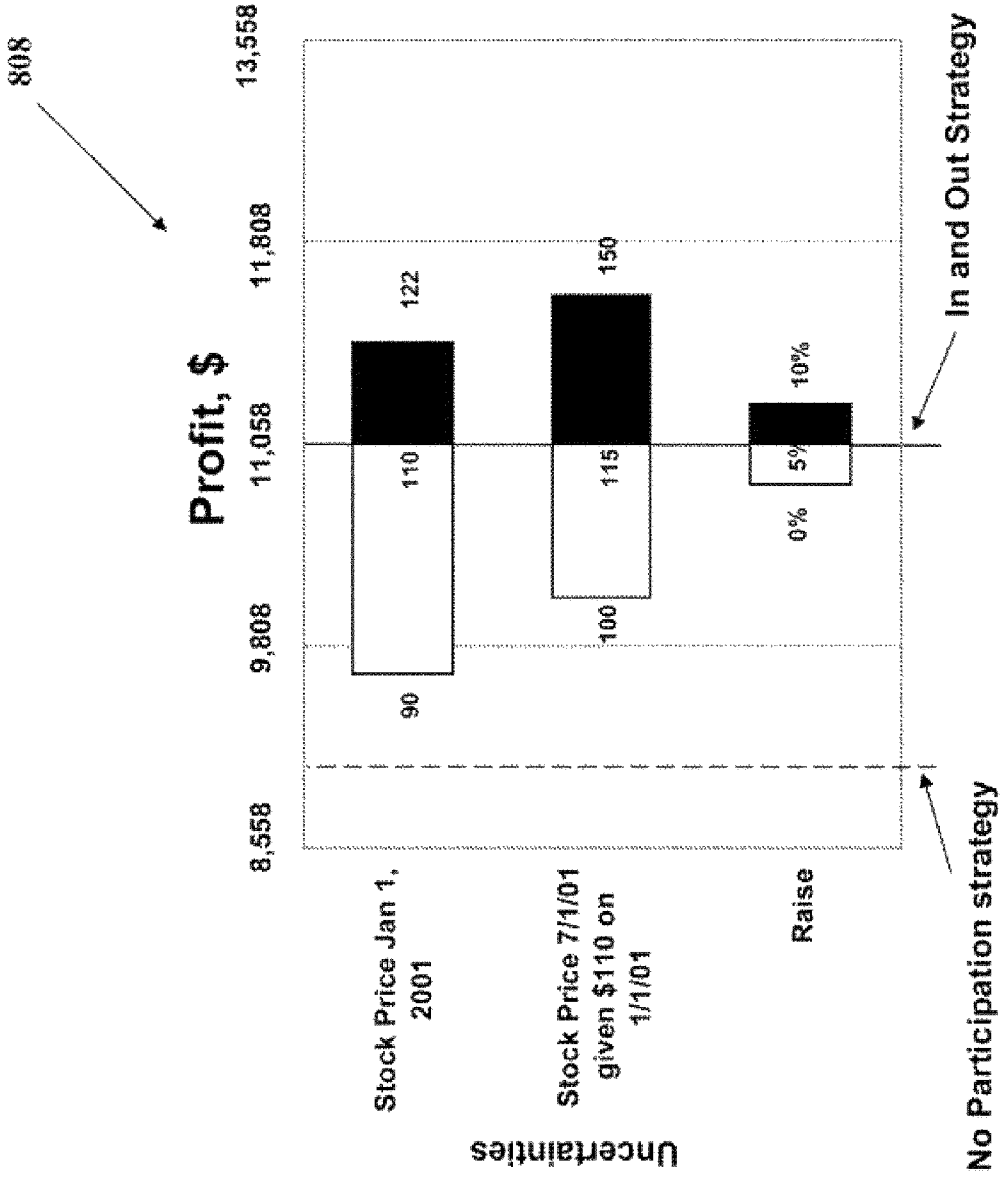

808
Profit, $
13,558
11,808
11,058
9,808
8,558
122
110
90
150
115
100
10%
5%
0%
In and Out Strategy
No Participation strategy
Uncertainties
Stock Price Jan 1, 2001
Stock Price 7/1/01 given $110 on 1/1/01
Raise

Fig. 8f

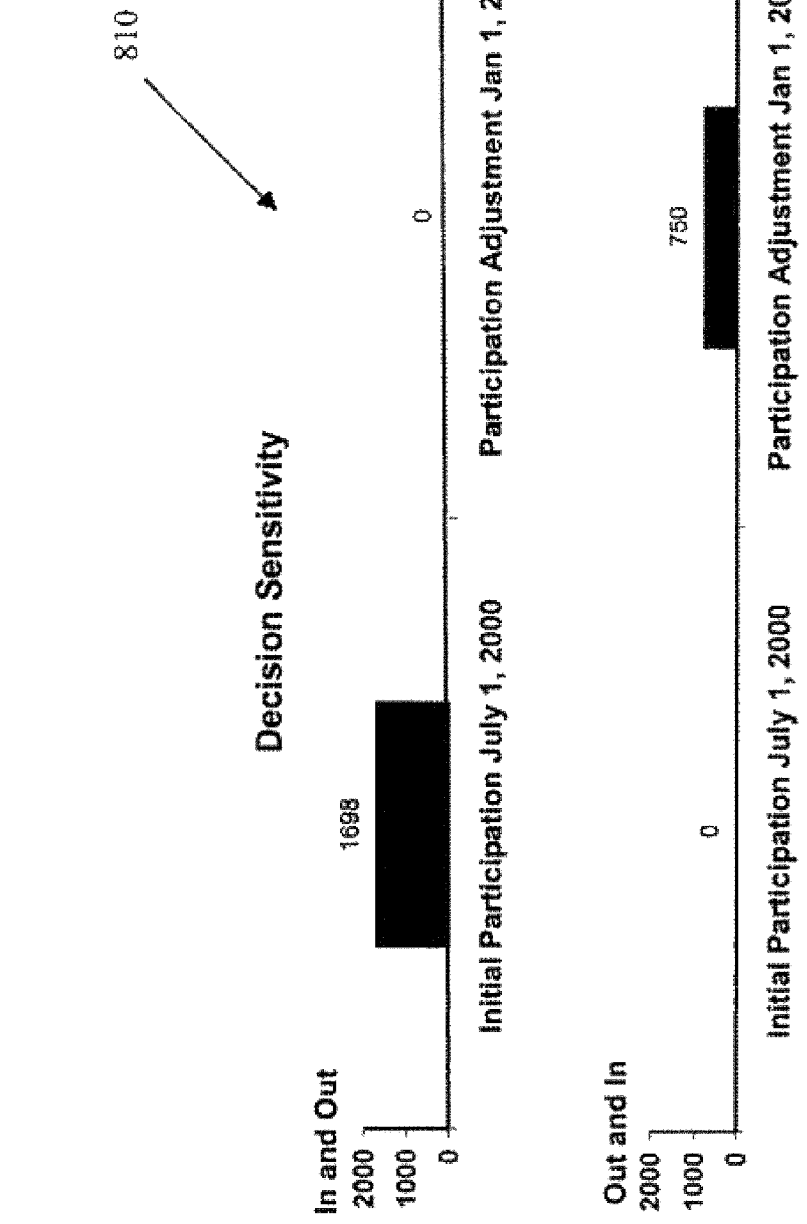

810
Decision Sensitivity
In and Out
2000
1000
0
1698
0
Initial Participation July 1, 2000
Participation Adjustment Jan 1, 2001
Out and In
2000
1000
0
0
750
Initial Participation July 1, 2000
Participation Adjustment Jan 1, 2001

Fig. 8g

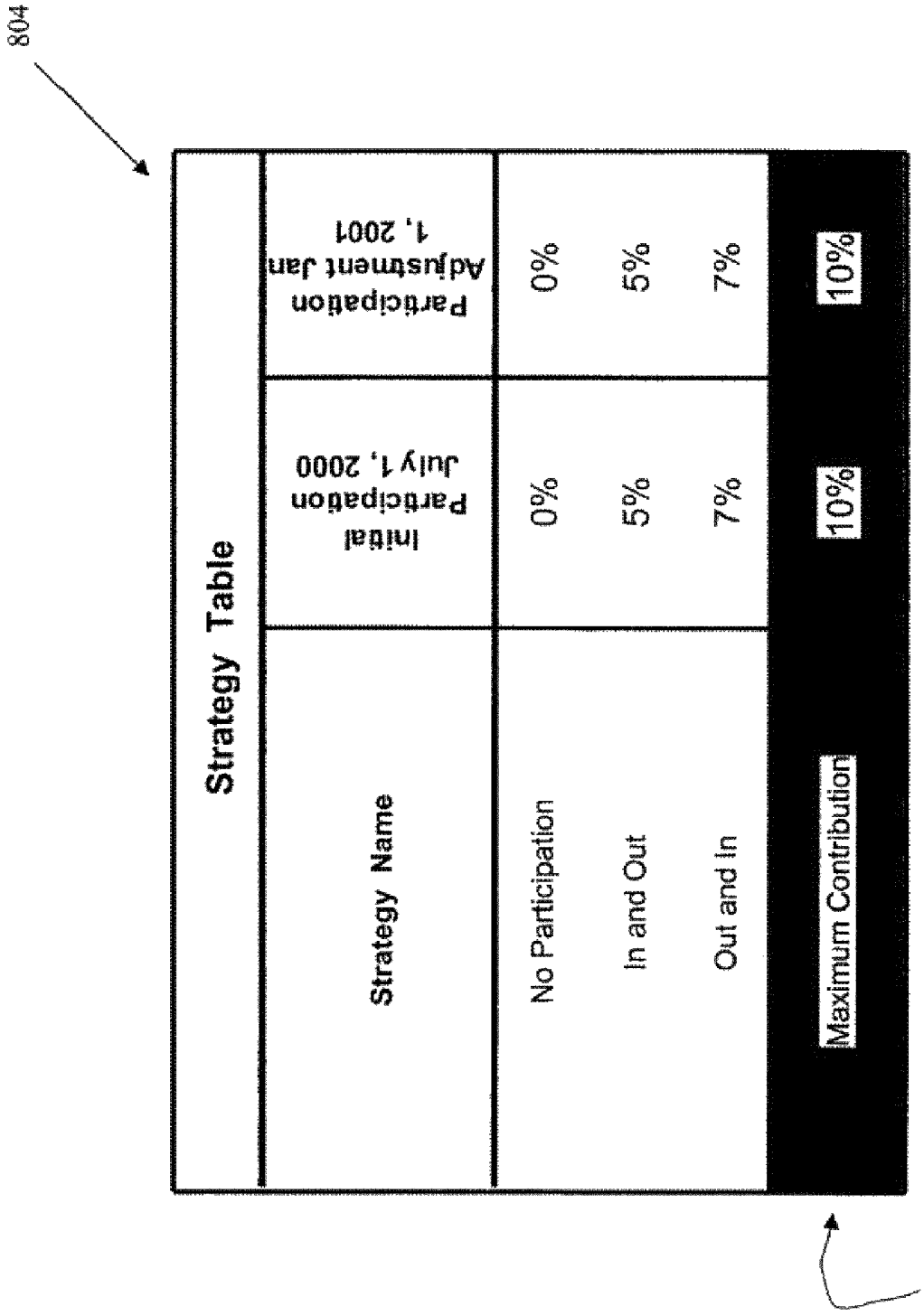

804
Strategy Table
Strategy Name
Initial Participation July 1, 2000
Participation Adjustment Jan 1, 2001
No Participation
In and Out
Out and In
0%
5%
7%
0%
5%
7%
Maximum Contribution
10%
10%
811

Fig. 8h

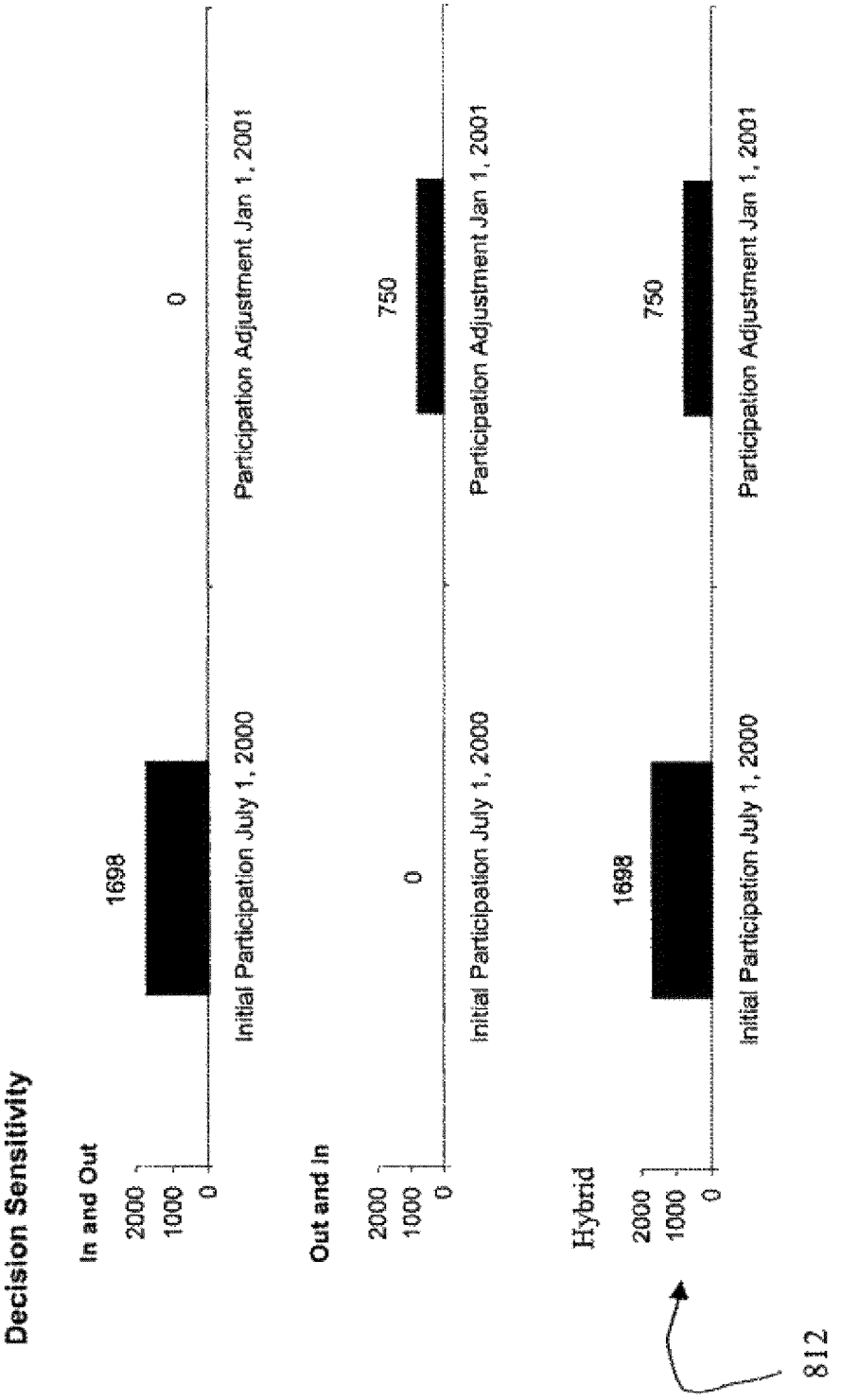

Decision Sensitivity
In and Out
2000
1000
0
1698
0
Initial Participation July 1, 2000
Participation Adjustment Jan 1, 2001
Out and In
2000
1000
0
0
750
Initial Participation July 1, 2000
Participation Adjustment Jan 1, 2001
Hybrid
2000
1000
0
1698
750
Initial Participation July 1, 2000
Participation Adjustment Jan 1, 2001
812

Fig. 8i

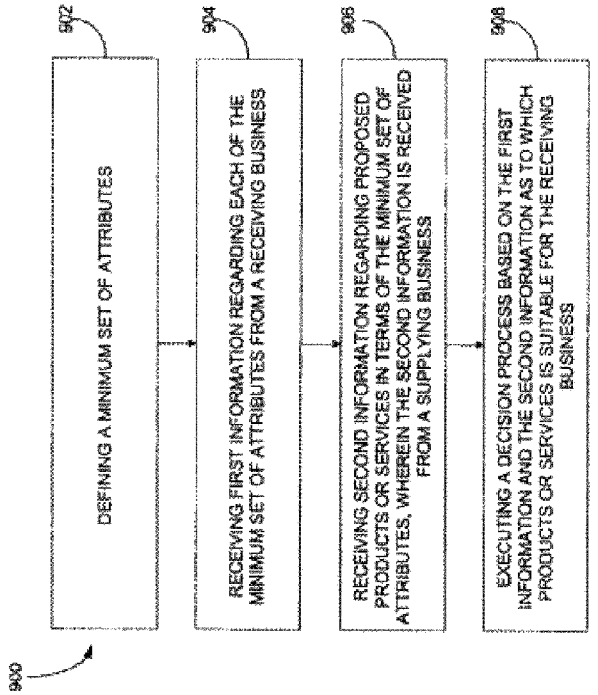

900
902
DEFINING A MINIMUM SET OF ATTRIBUTES
904
RECEIVING FIRST INFORMATION REGARDING EACH OF THE MINIMUM SET OF ATTRIBUTES FROM A RECEIVING BUSINESS
906
RECEIVING SECOND INFORMATION REGARDING PROPOSED PRODUCTS OR SERVICES IN TERMS OF THE MINIMUM SET OF ATTRIBUTES, WHEREIN THE SECOND INFORMATION IS RECEIVED FROM A SUPPLYING BUSINESS
908
EXECUTING A DECISION PROCESS BASED ON THE FIRST INFORMATION AND THE SECOND INFORMATION AS TO WHICH PRODUCTS OR SERVICES IS SUITABLE FOR THE RECEIVING BUSINESS

Fig. 9

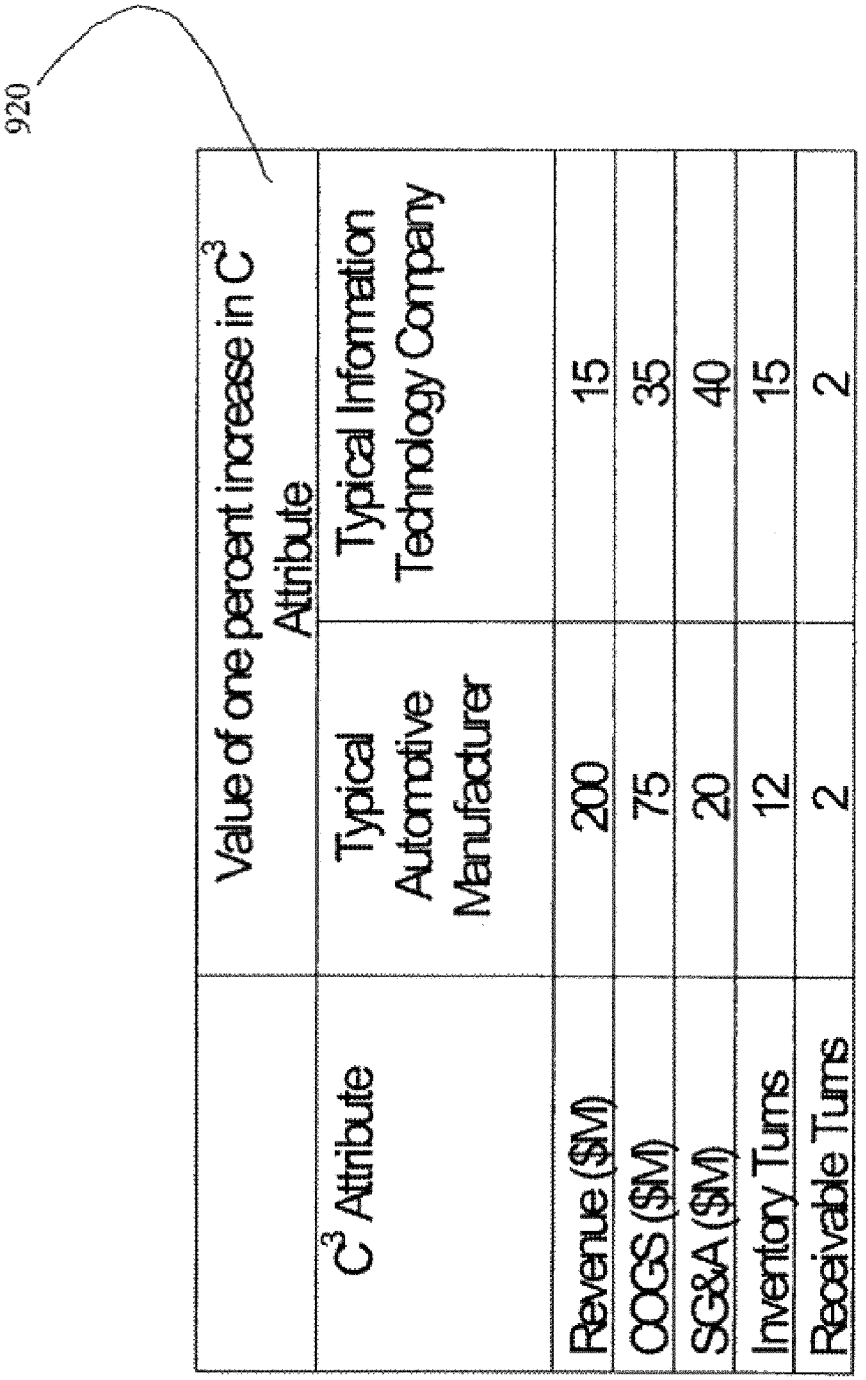
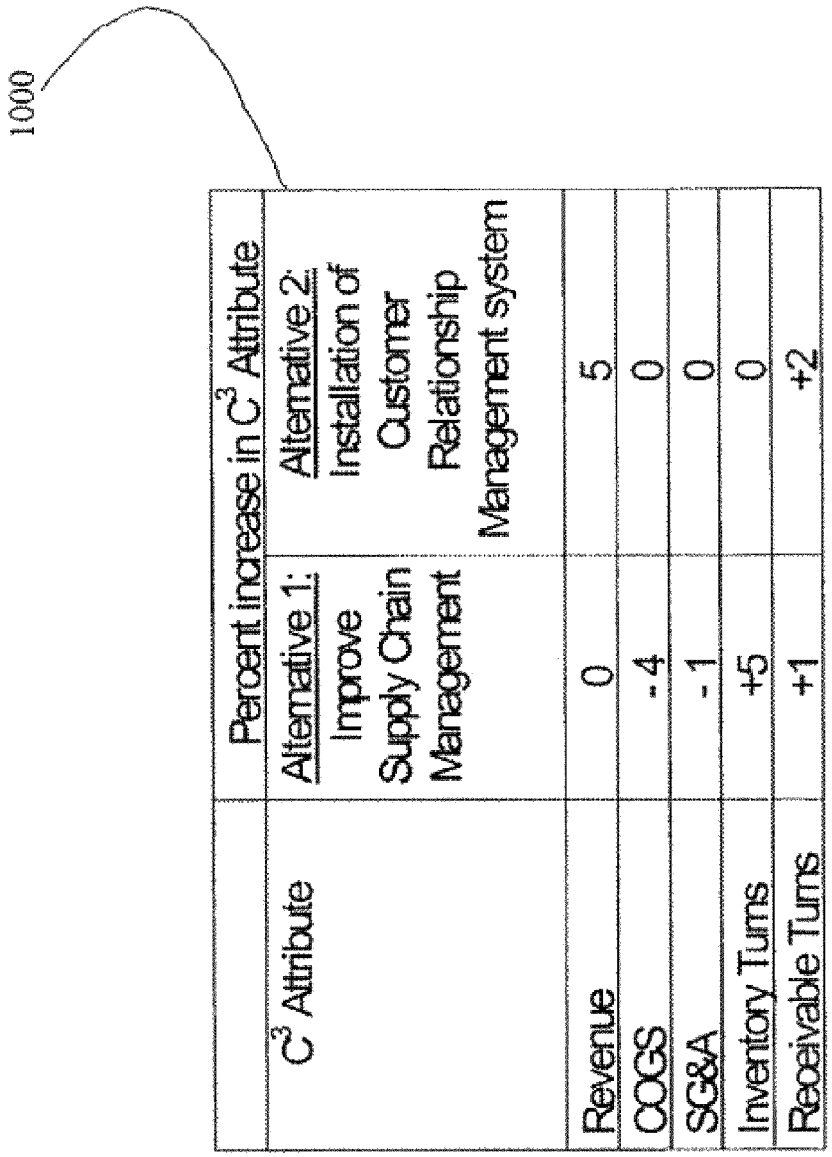

920
Value of one percent increase in C3 Attribute
C3 Attribute
Typical Automotive Manufacturer
Typical Information Technology Company
Revenue ($M) 200 15
COGS ($M) 75 35
SG&A ($M) 20 40
Inventory Turns 12 15
Receivable Turns 2 2

Fig. 9a



	Percent increase in C^3 Attribute	
C^3 Attribute	Alternative 1: Improve Supply Chain Management	Alternative 2: Installation of Customer Relationship Management system
Revenue	0	5
COGS	-4	0
SG&A	-1	0
Inventory Turns	+5	0
Receivable Turns	+1	+2

Fig. 10

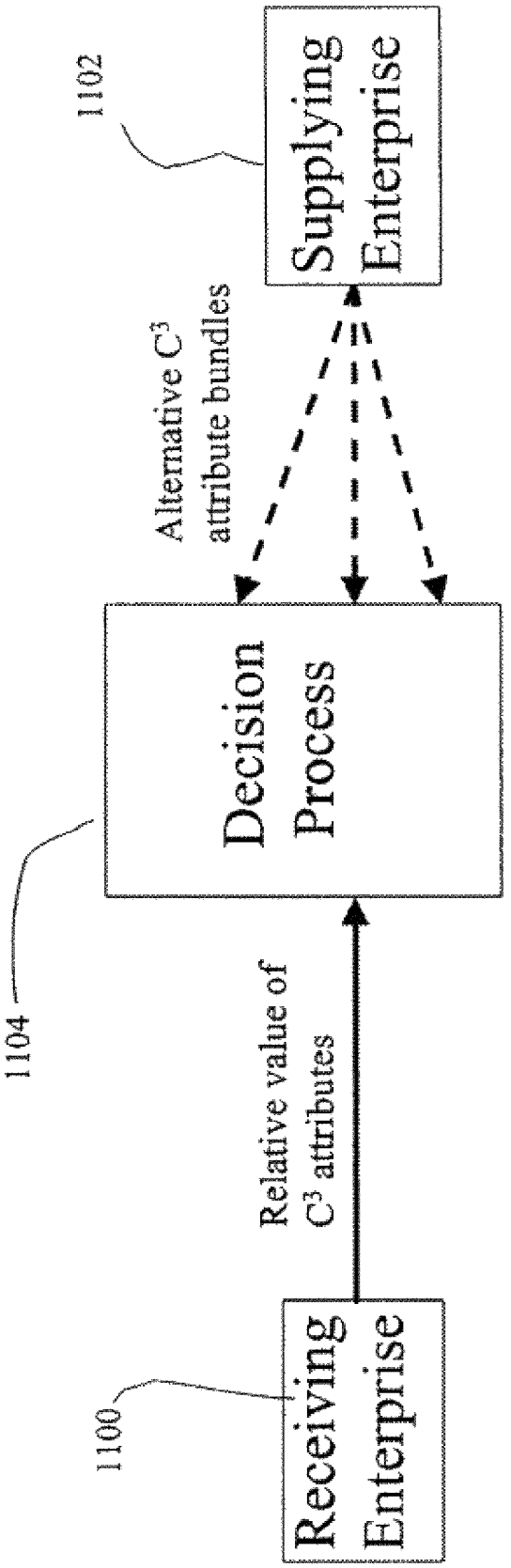

1102
Supplying Enterprise
Alternative C3 attribute bundles
Decision Process
1104
Relative value of C3 attributes
1100
Receiving Enterprise

Fig. 11

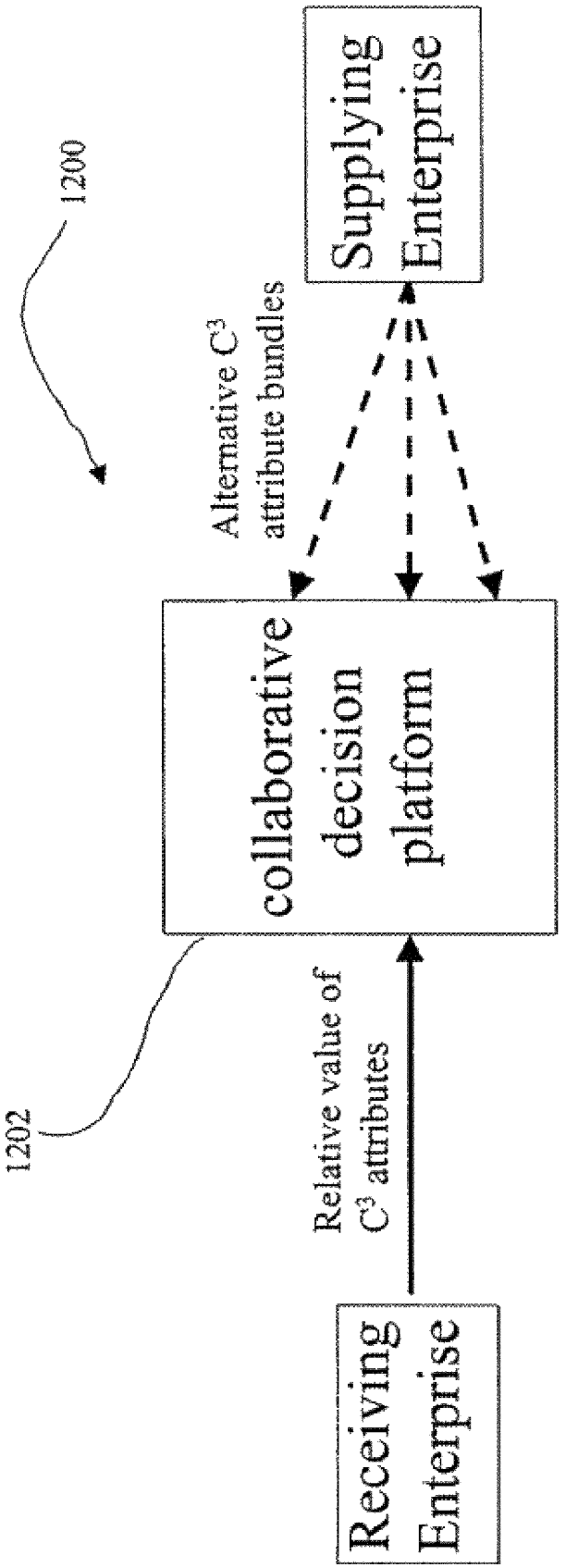

1200
Supplying Enterprise
Alternative C^3 attribute bundles
collaborative decision platform
1202
Relative value of C^3 attributes
Receiving Enterprise

Fig. 12

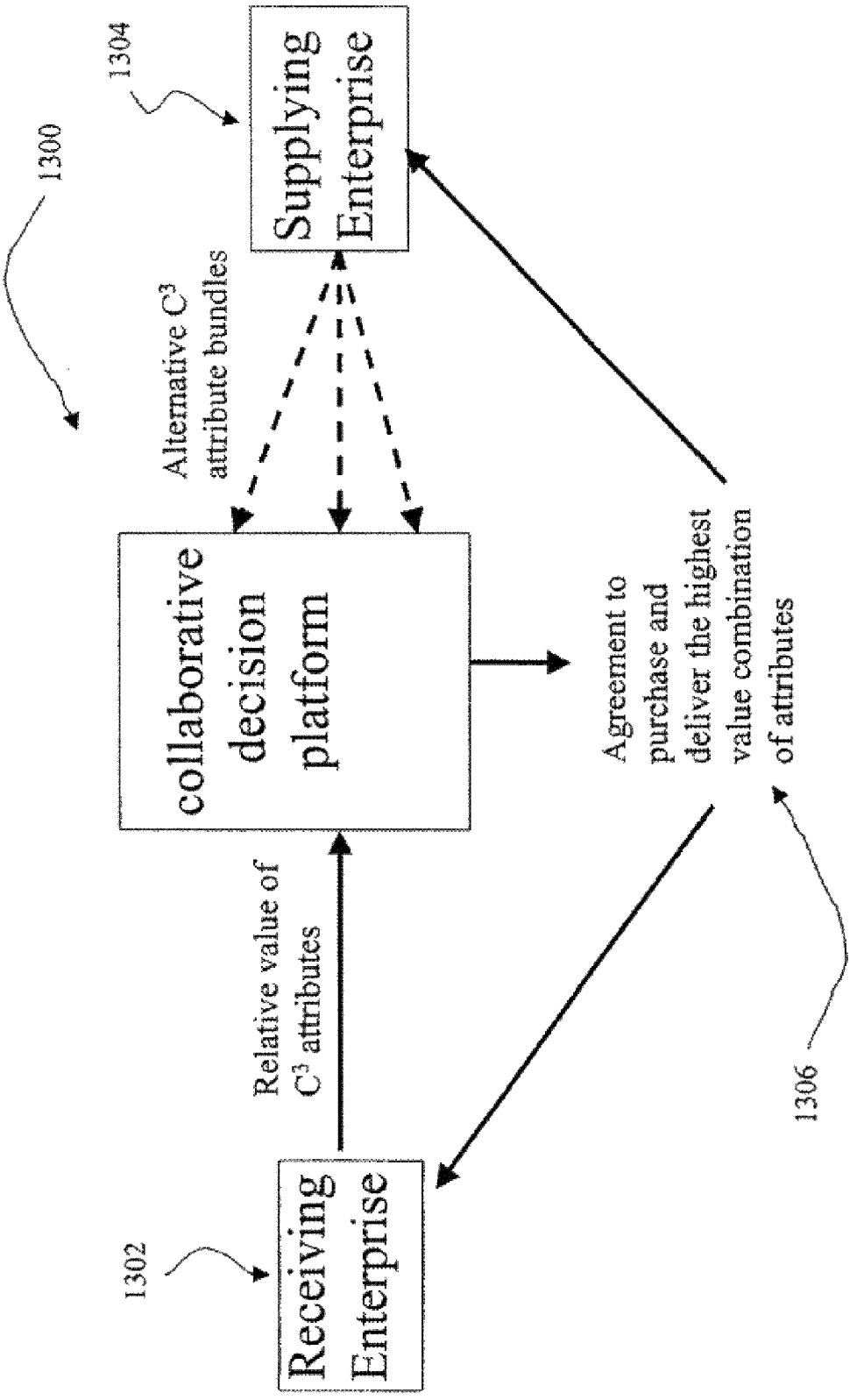

1300
1304
Supplying Enterprise
Alternative C3 attribute bundles
collaborative decision platform
Agreement to purchase and deliver the highest value combination of attributes
1306
Relative value of C3 attributes
1302
Receiving Enterprise

Fig. 13

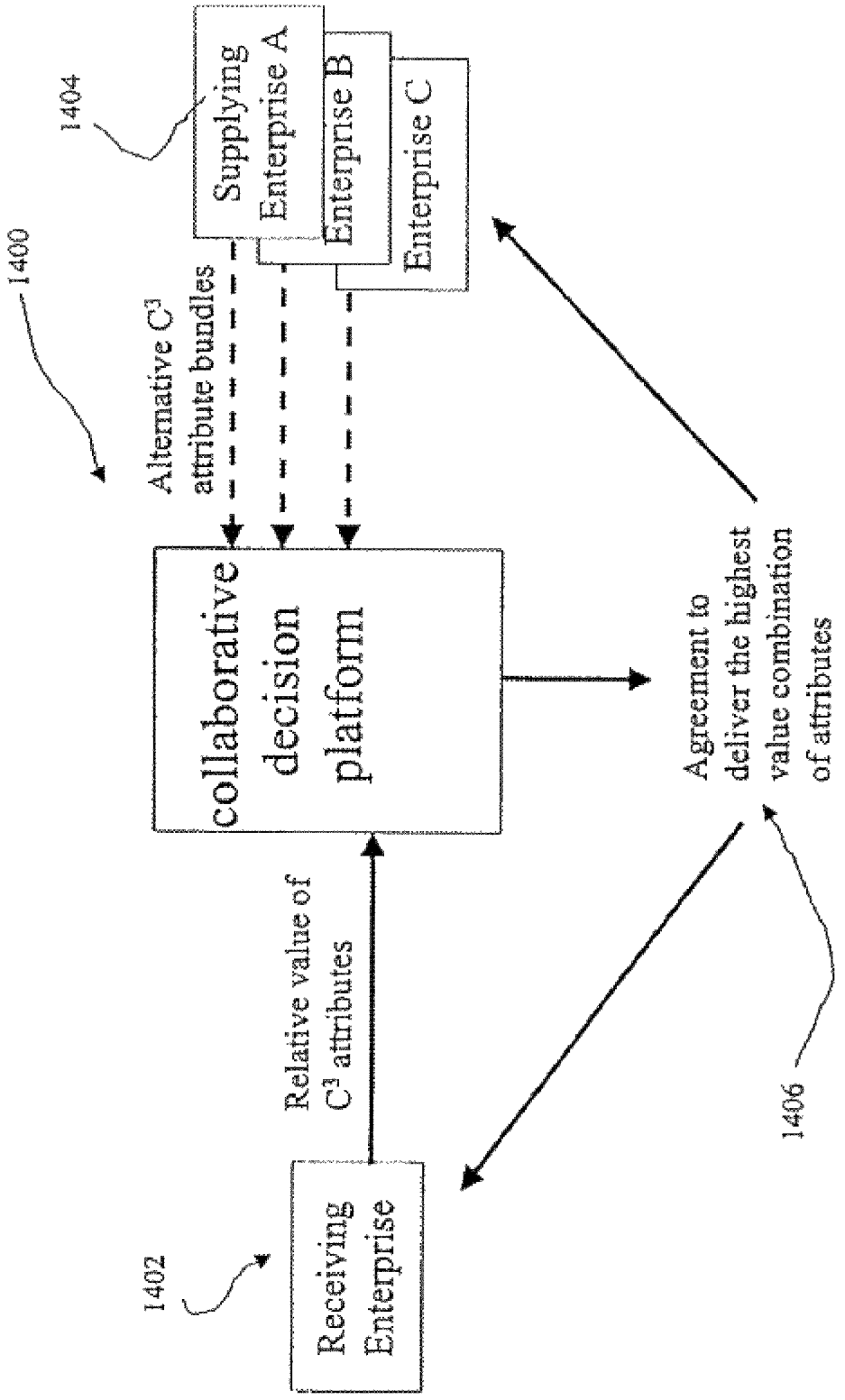

1400
1404
Supplying Enterprise A
Enterprise B
Enterprise C
Alternative C³ attribute bundles
collaborative decision platform
Agreement to deliver the highest value combination of attributes
Relative value of C³ attributes
1402
Receiving Enterprise
1406

Fig. 14

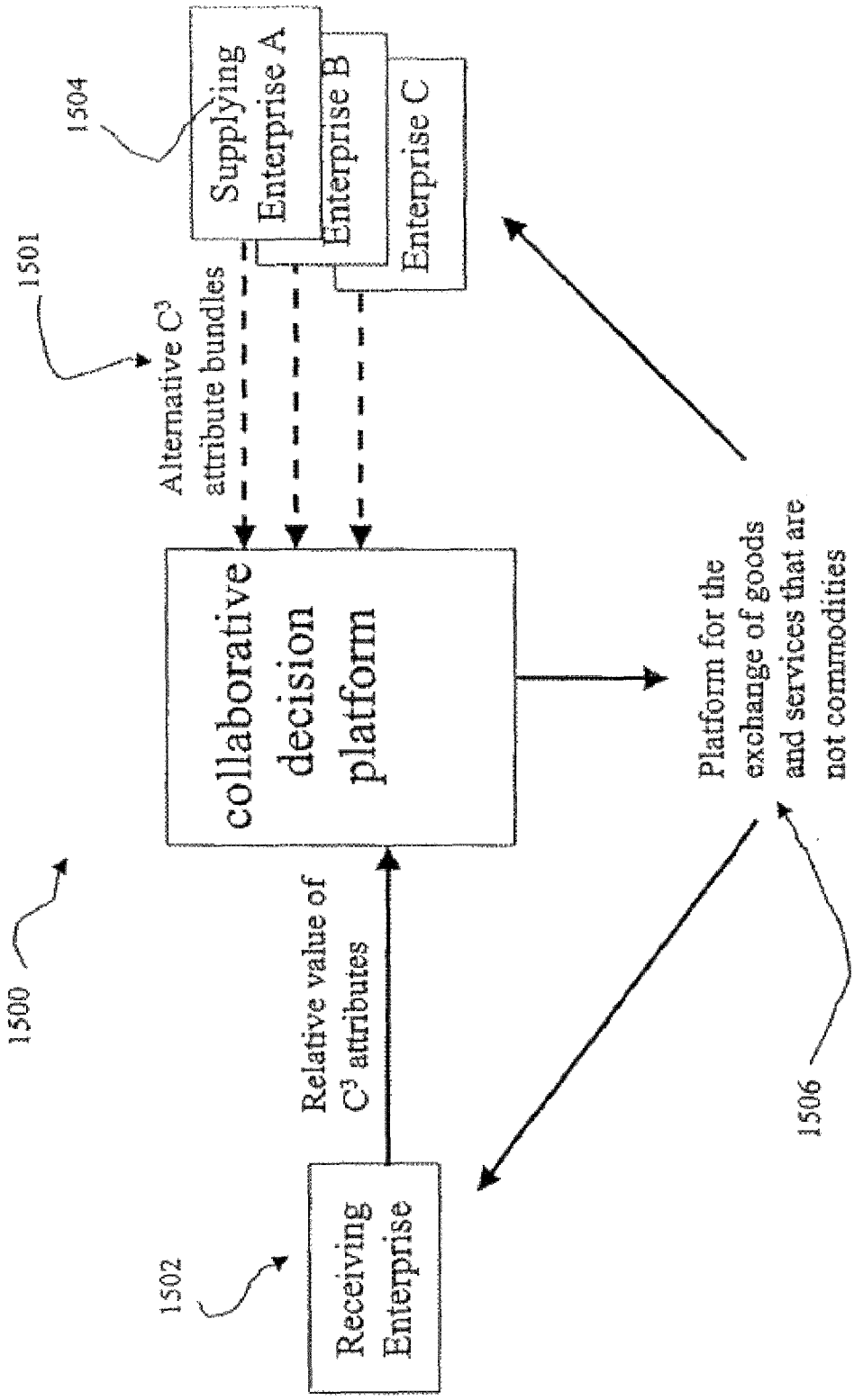

1500
1501
1502
1504
1506
Supplying Enterprise A
Enterprise B
Enterprise C
Alternative C³ attribute bundles
collaborative decision platform
Relative value of C³ attributes
Receiving Enterprise
Platform for the exchange of goods and services that are not commodities

Fig. 15

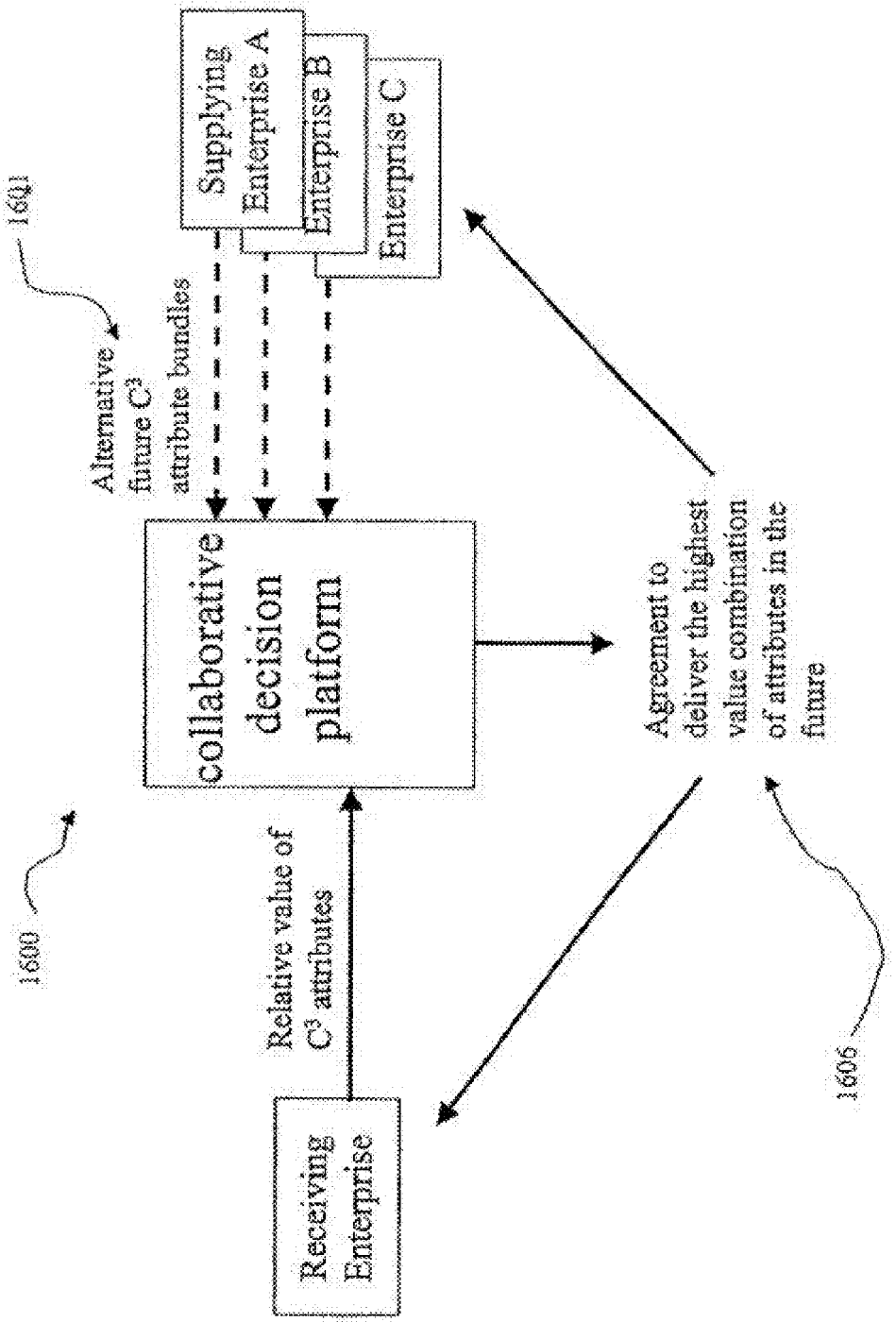

1600
1601
Alternative future C3 attribute bundles
Supplying Enterprise A
Enterprise B
Enterprise C
collaborative decision platform
Relative value of C3 attributes
Receiving Enterprise
Agreement to deliver the highest value combination of attributes in the future
1606

Fig. 16

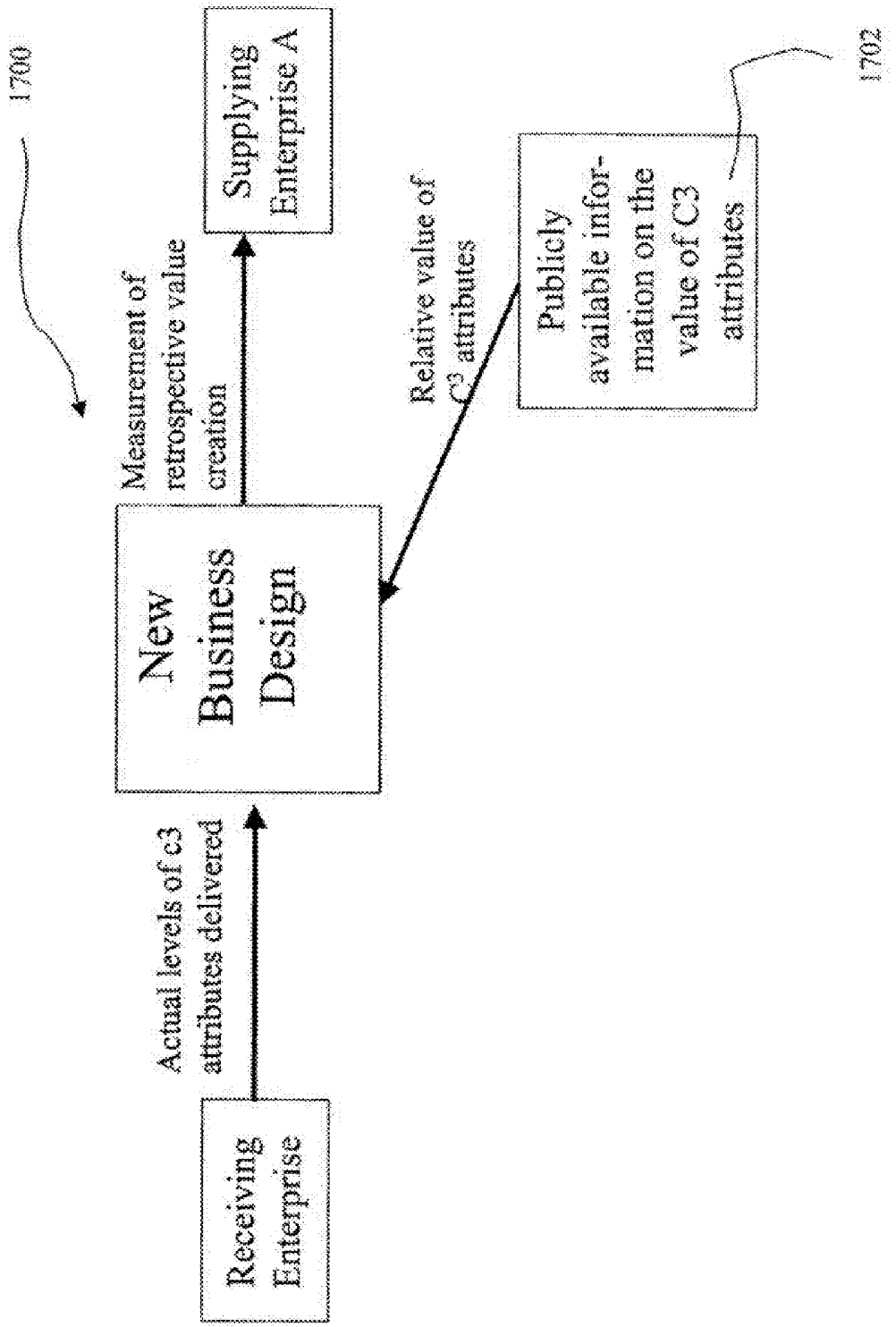

1700
Supplying Enterprise A
Measurement of retrospective value creation
Relative value of C3 attributes
Publicly available information on the value of C3 attributes
1702
New Business Design
Actual levels of c3 attributes delivered
Receiving Enterprise

Fig. 17

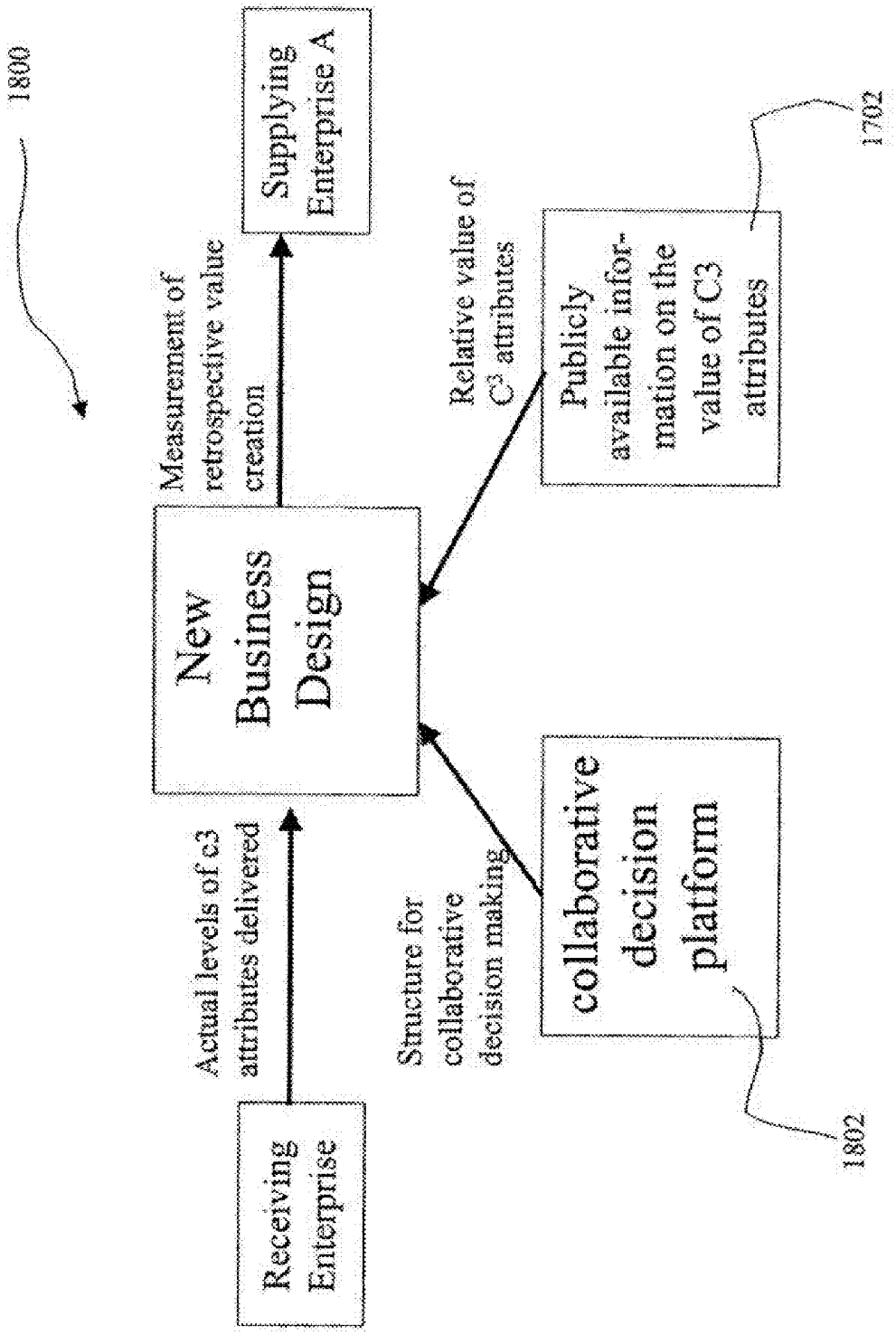

1800
Supplying Enterprise A
Measurement of retrospective value creation
Relative value of C3 attributes
Publicly available information on the value of C3 attributes
1702
New Business Design
Actual levels of c3 attributes delivered
Structure for collaborative decision making
collaborative decision platform
1802
Receiving Enterprise

Fig. 18

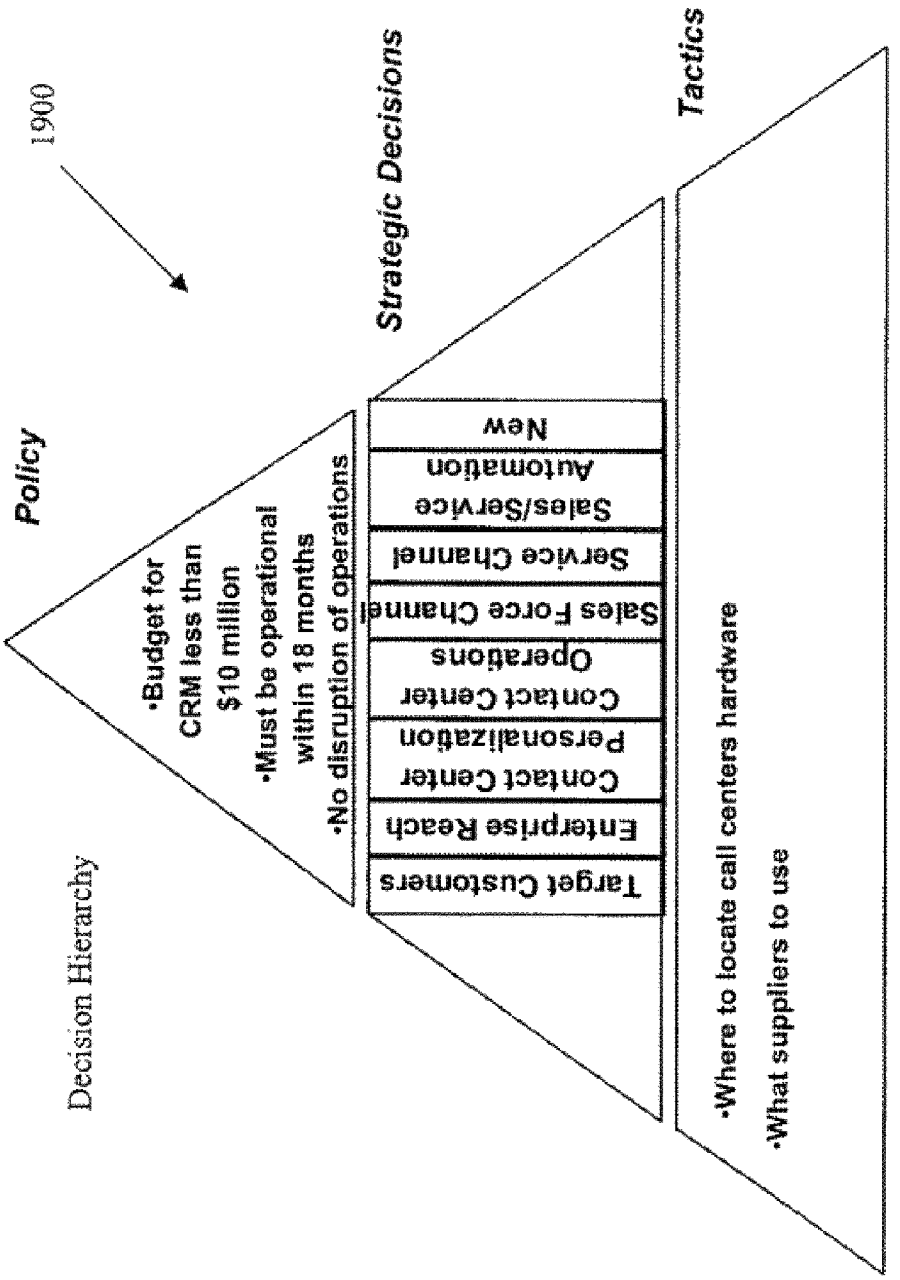

1900
Decision Hierarchy
Policy
•Budget for CRM less than $10 million
•Must be operational within 18 months
•No disruption of operations
Strategic Decisions
Target Customers
Enterprise Reach
Contact Center Personalization
Contact Center Operations
Sales Force Channel
Service Channel
Sales/Service Automation
New
Tactics
•Where to locate call centers hardware
•What suppliers to use

Fig. 19

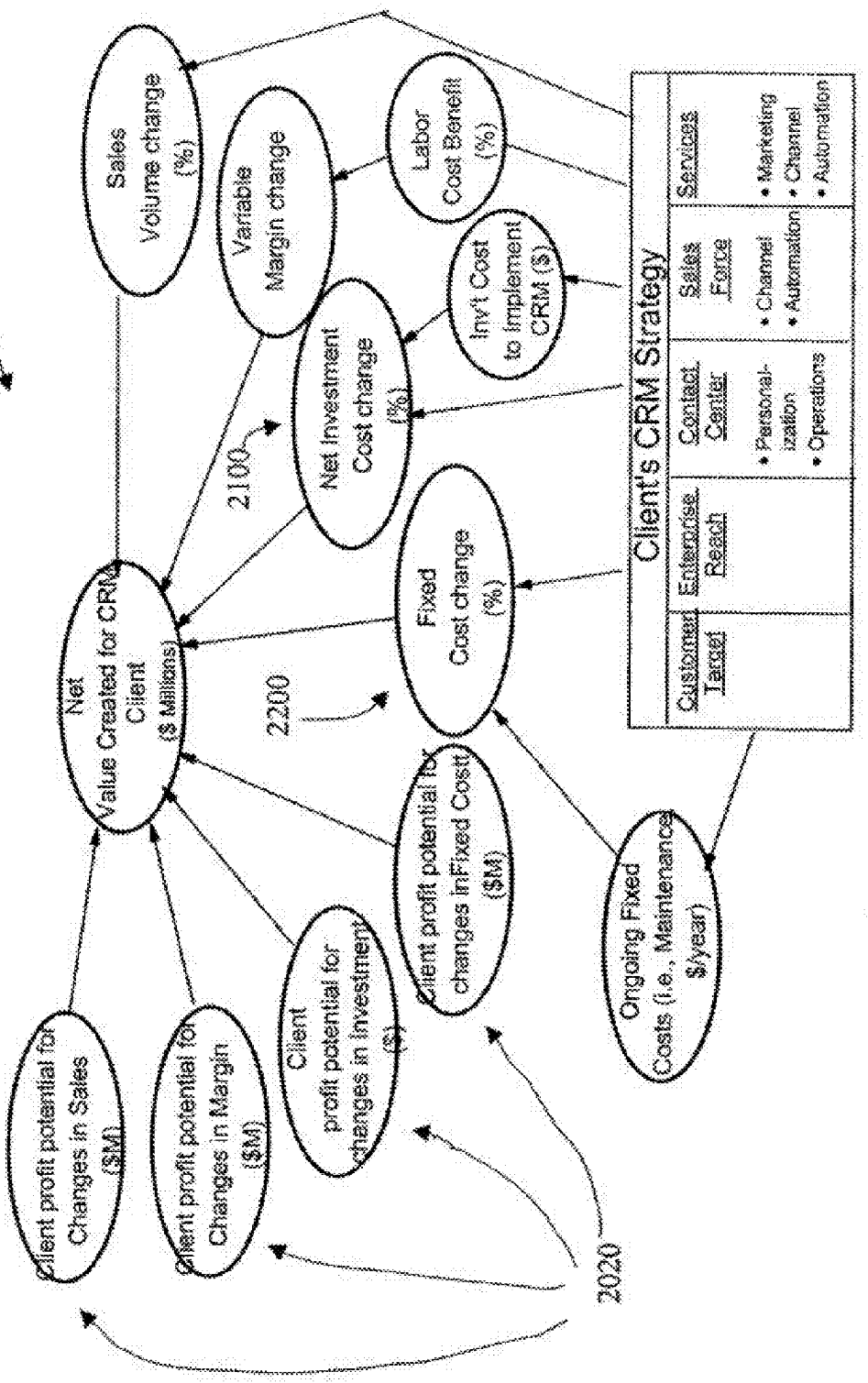

2000
Sales Volume change (%)
Variable Margin change
Labor Cost Benefit (%)
Invt Cost to implement CRM ($)
Net Investment Cost change (%)
2100
Net Value Created for CRM Client ($ Millions)
2200
Fixed Cost change (%)
Client's CRM Strategy
Customer Target
Enterprise Reach
Contact Center
• Personalization
• Operations
Sales Force
• Channel
• Automation
Services
• Marketing
• Channel
• Automation
Client profit potential for Changes in Sales ($M)
Client profit potential for Changes in Margin ($M)
Client profit potential for changes in Investment ($)
Client profit potential for changes inFixed Cost ($M)
Ongoing Fixed Costs (i.e., Maintenance $/year)
2020

Fig. 20

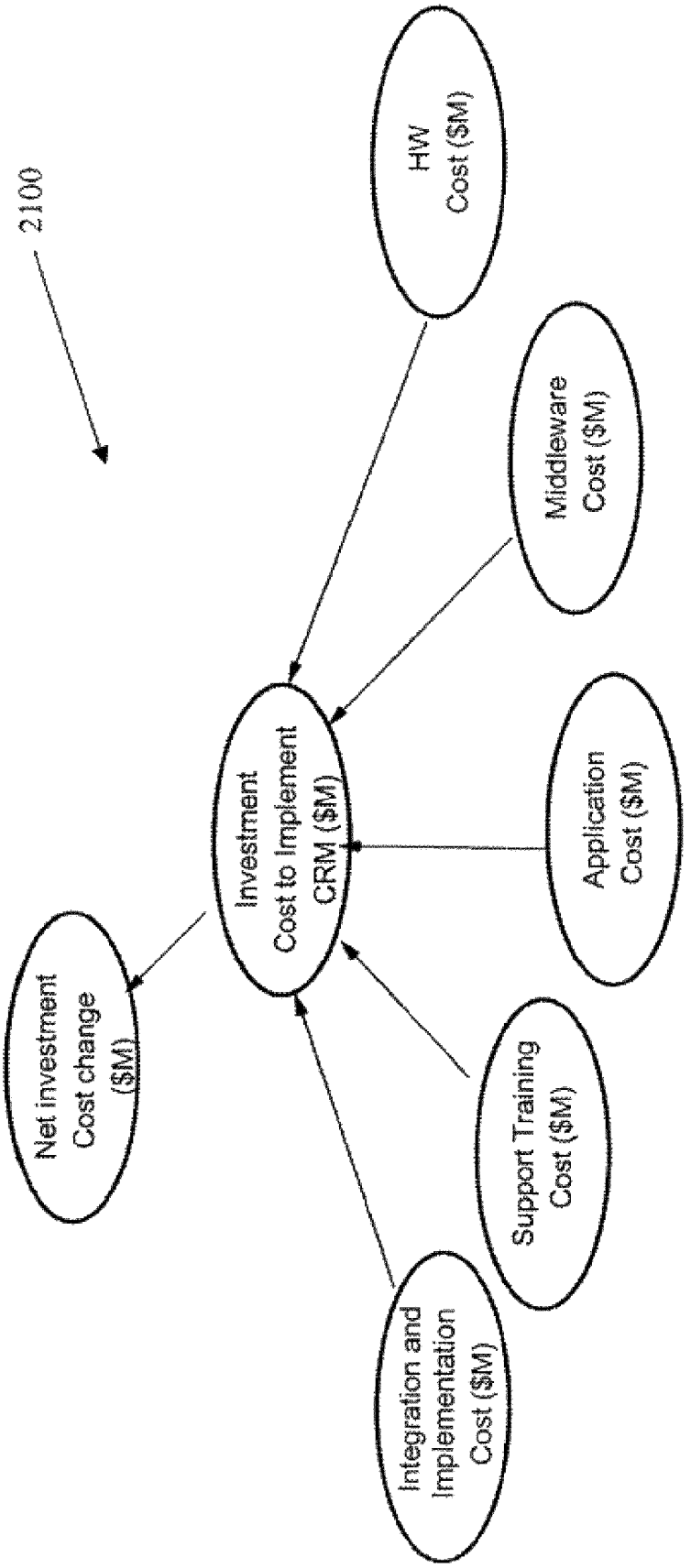

2100
HW Cost ($M)
Middleware Cost ($M)
Application Cost ($M)
Support Training Cost ($M)
Integration and Implementation Cost ($M)
Investment Cost to Implement CRM ($M)
Net investment Cost change ($M)

Fig. 21

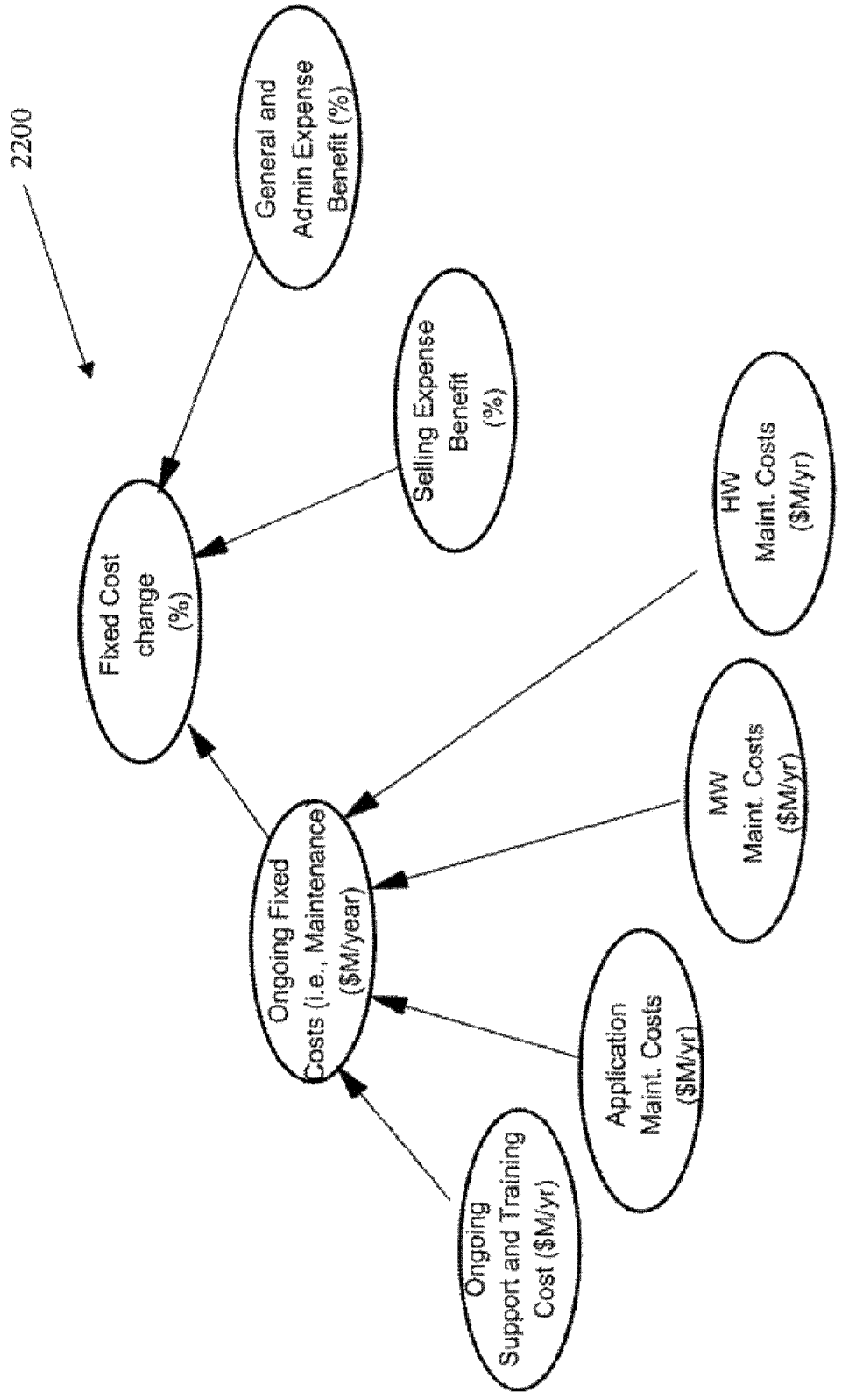

2200
General and Admin Expense Benefit (%)
Selling Expense Benefit (%)
Fixed Cost change (%)
HW Maint. Costs ($M/yr)
MW Maint. Costs ($M/yr)
Ongoing Fixed Costs (i.e., Maintenance ($M/year)
Application Maint. Costs ($M/yr)
Ongoing Support and Training Cost ($M/yr)

Fig. 22

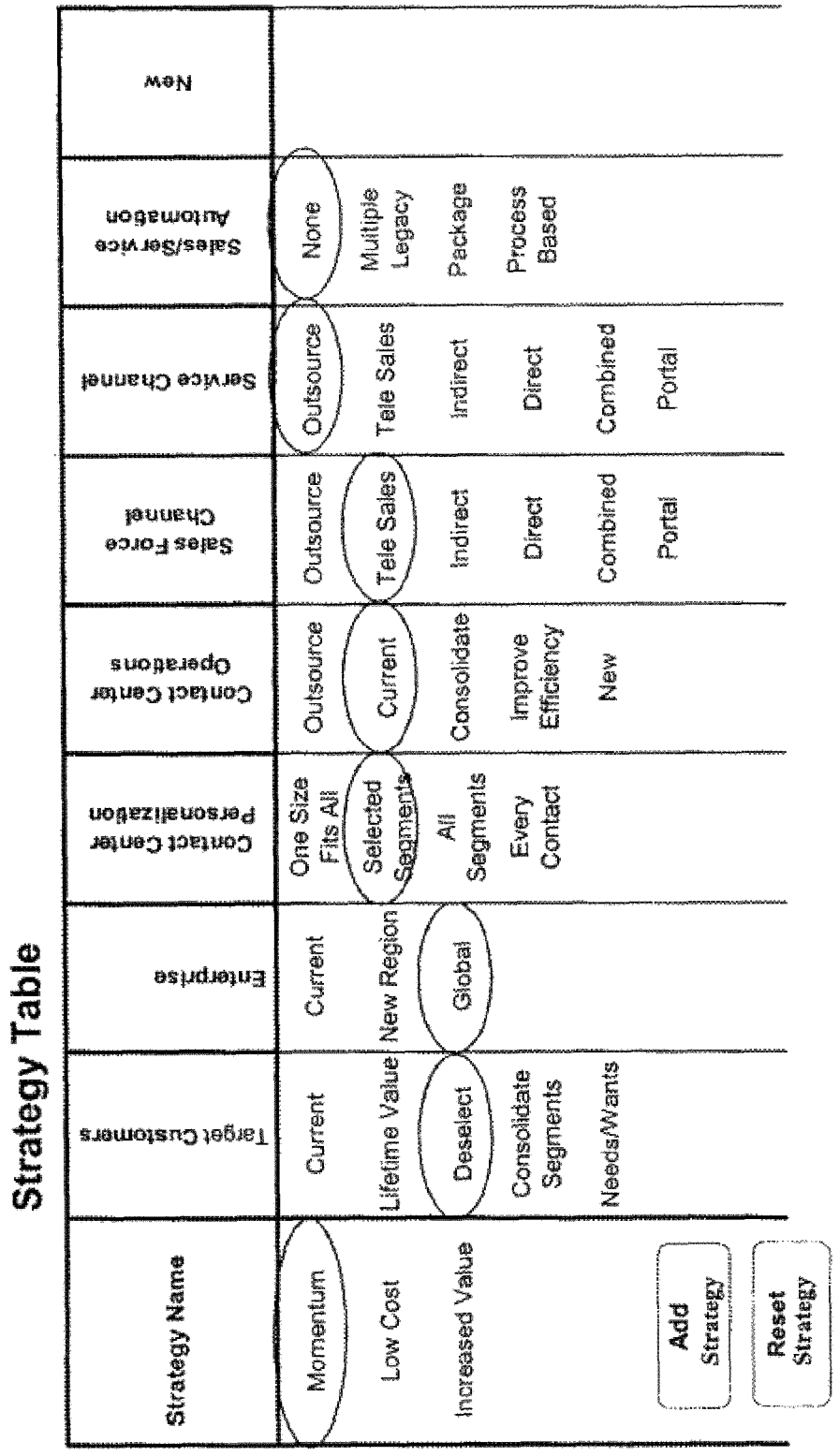

Strategy Table
Strategy Name
Target Customers
Enterprise
Contact Center Personalization
Contact Center Operations
Sales Force Channel
Service Channel
Sales/Service Automation
New
Momentum
Low Cost
Increased Value
Current
Lifetime Value
Deselect
Consolidate Segments
Needs/Wants
Current
New Region
Global
One Size Fits All
Selected Segments
All Segments
Every Contact
Outsource
Current
Consolidate
Improve Efficiency
New
Outsource
Tele Sales
Indirect
Direct
Combined
Portal
Outsource
Tele Sales
Indirect
Direct
Combined
Portal
None
Multiple Legacy
Package
Process Based
Add Strategy
Reset Strategy
2300

Fig. 23a

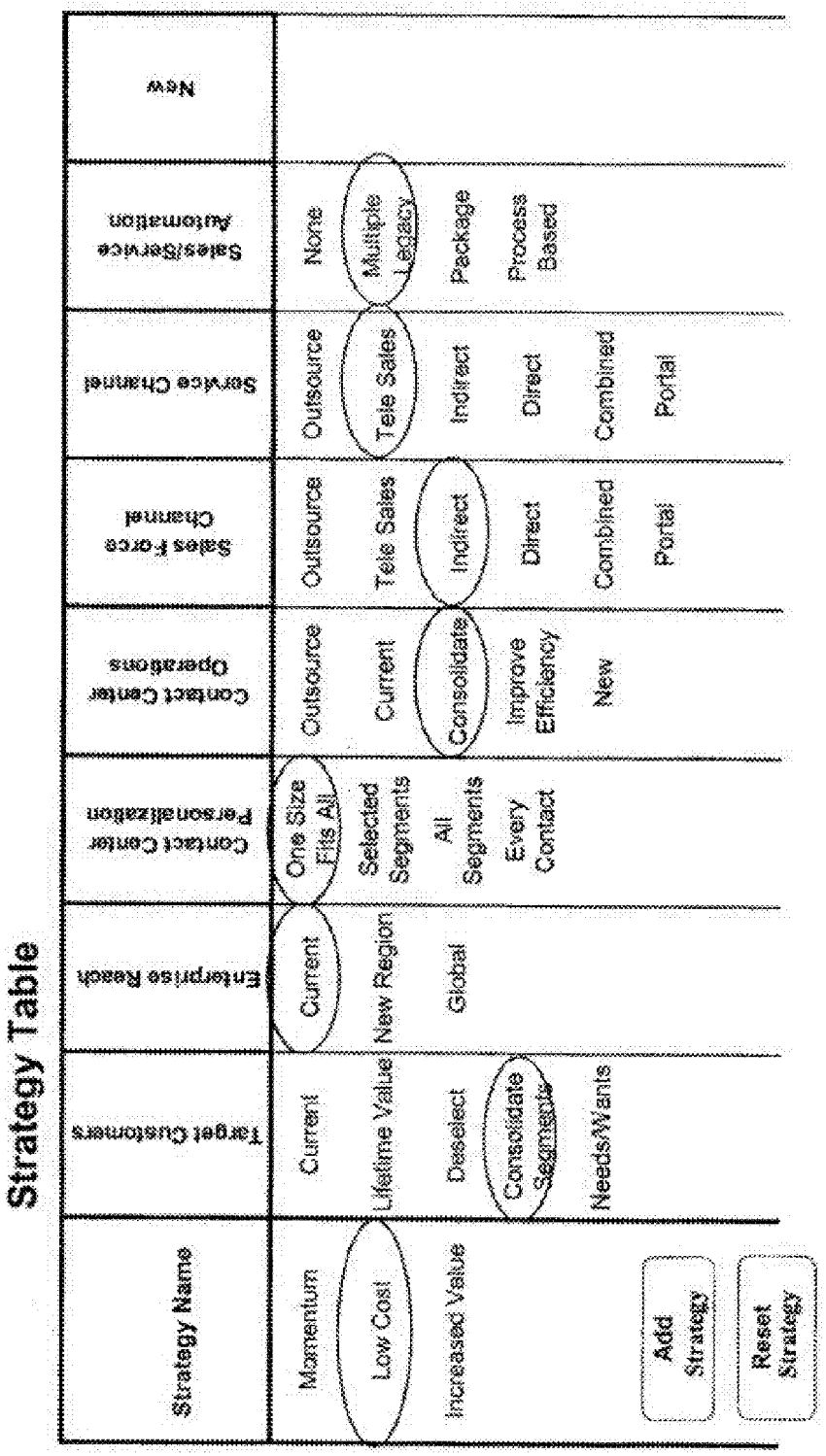

Strategy Table
Strategy Name
Target Customers
Enterprise Reach
Contact Center Personalization
Contact Center Operations
Sales Force Channel
Service Channel
Sales/Service Automation
New
Momentum
Low Cost
Increased Value
Current
Lifetime Value
Deselect
Consolidate Segments
Needs/Wants
Current
New Region
Global
One Size Fits All
Selected Segments
All Segments
Every Contact
Outsource
Current
Consolidate
Improve Efficiency
New
Outsource
Tele Sales
Indirect
Direct
Combined
Portal
Outsource
Tele Sales
Indirect
Direct
Combined
Portal
None
Multiple Legacy
Package
Process Based
Add Strategy
Reset Strategy
2302

Fig. 23b

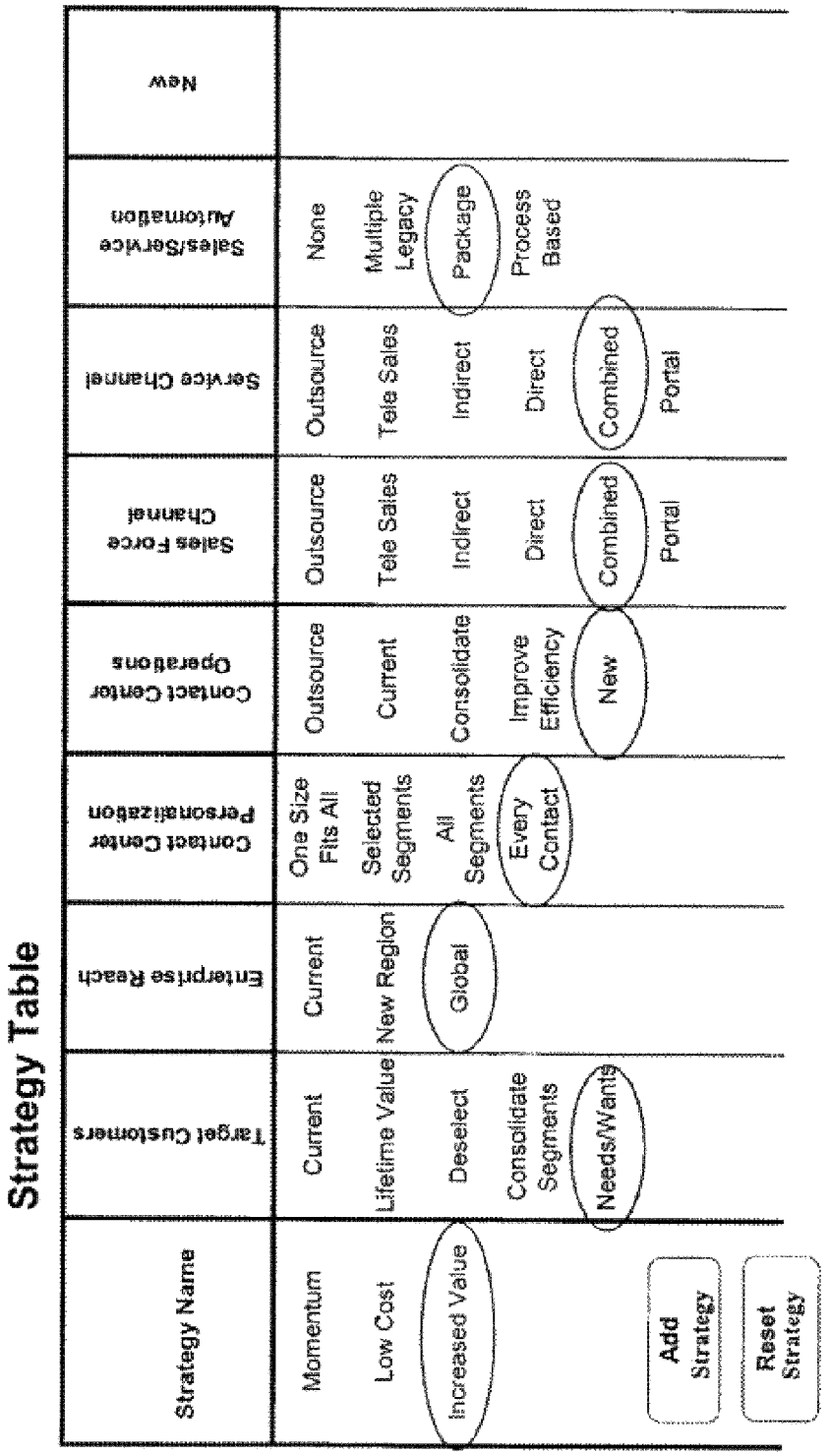

Strategy Table
Strategy Name
Target Customers
Enterprise Reach
Contact Center Personalization
Contact Center Operations
Sales Force Channel
Service Channel
Sales/Service Automation
New
Momentum
Low Cost
Increased Value
Current
Lifetime Value
Deselect
Consolidate Segments
Needs/Wants
Current
New Region
Global
One Size Fits All
Selected Segments
All Segments
Every Contact
Outsource
Current
Consolidate
Improve Efficiency
New
Outsource
Tele Sales
Indirect
Direct
Combined
Portal
Outsource
Tele Sales
Indirect
Direct
Combined
Portal
None
Multiple Legacy
Package
Process Based
Add Strategy
Reset Strategy
2304

Fig. 23c

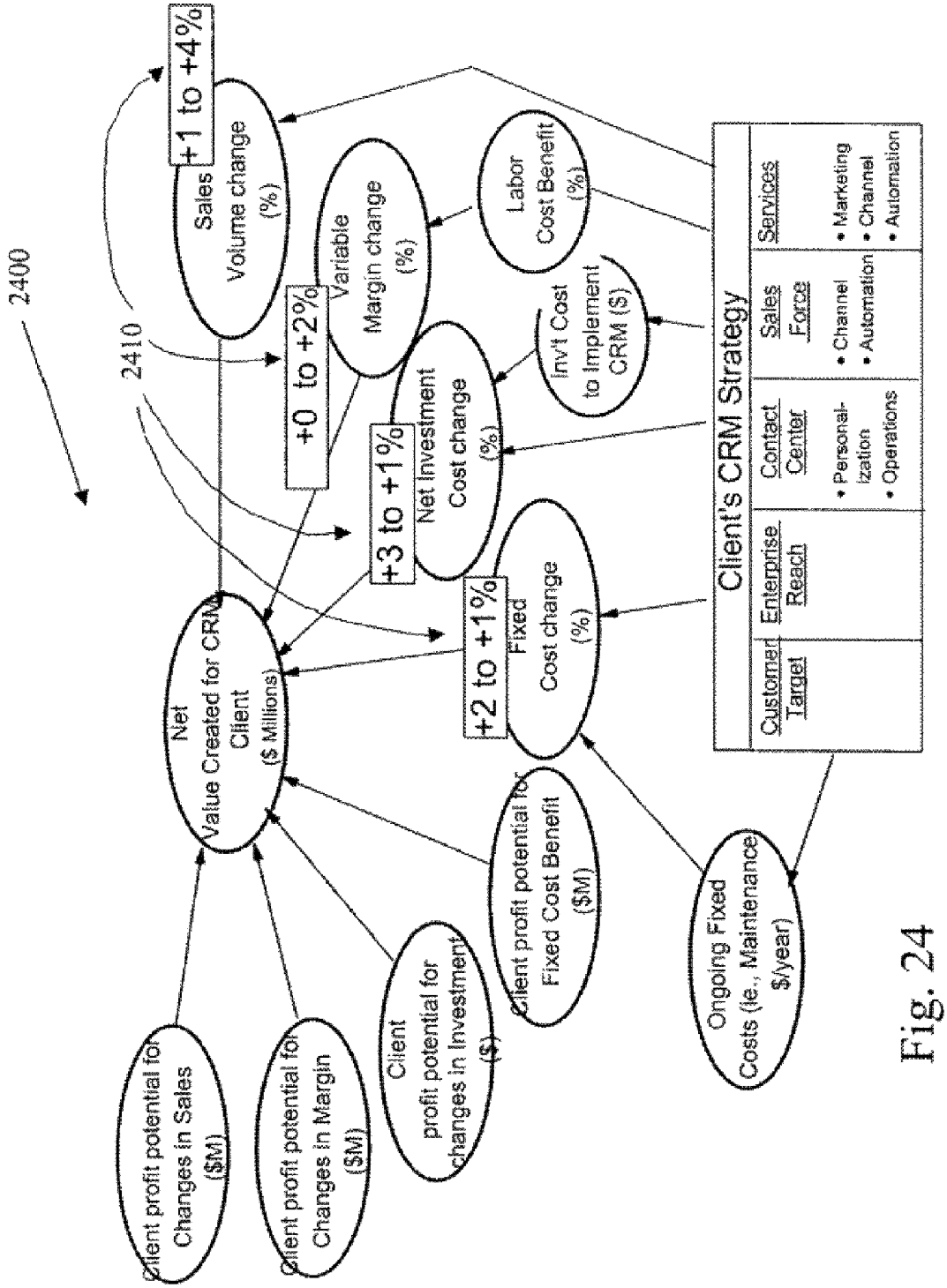

2400
2410
Net Value Created for CRM Client ($ Millions)
Sales Volume change (%)
+1 to +4%
+0 to +2%
Variable Margin change (%)
+3 to +1%
Net Investment Cost change (%)
+2 to +1%
Fixed Cost change (%)
Labor Cost Benefit (%)
Inv't Cost to Implement CRM ($)
Client's CRM Strategy
Customer Target
Enterprise Reach
Contact Center
• Personalization
• Operations
Sales Force
• Channel
• Automation
Services
• Marketing
• Channel
• Automation
Client profit potential for Changes in Sales ($M)
Client profit potential for Changes in Margin ($M)
Client profit potential for changes in Investment ($)
Client profit potential for Fixed Cost Benefit ($M)
Ongoing Fixed Costs (ie., Maintenance $/year)

Fig. 24

	Value of a one percent increase in the C3 attribute	Value of a one percent increase in the C3 attribute
C3 Attribute	**Typical New Vehicle for Automotive manufacturer ($ Millions/year)**	**Typical new software product for technology company ($ Millions/year)**
Sales Volume (units)	100	40
Variable Margin (%)	170	15
Investment Cost ($)	-20	-3
Fixed Cost ($)	-10	-30

2500

Fig. 25

C3 Attribute	Value of a one percent increase in the C3 attribute for a typical New Vehicle for Automotive manufacturer ($ Millions/year	Alternative 3: Best Buy/ Cost -Driven (Percent increase in the C3 attribute)	Total value for C3 attribute increase ($ Millions/year)
Sales Volume (units)	100	+2	200
Variable Margin (%)	170	+1	170
Investment Cost ($)	-20	+2	-40
Fixed Cost ($)	-10	+2	-20
Total			310

2600

Fig. 26

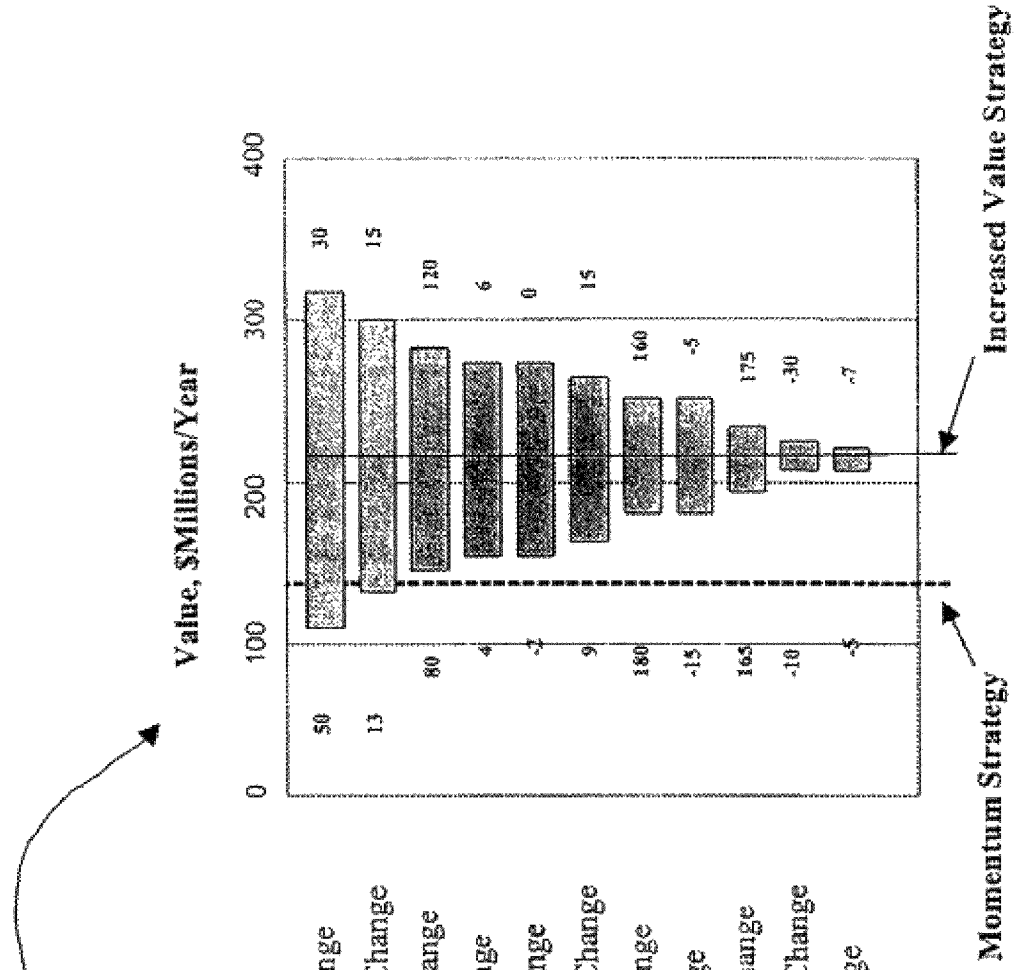

2700
Value, $Millions/Year
0
100
200
300
400
Uncertainties
Product Sales Volume Change
Client Profit for Product Sales Volume Change
Client Profit for Invest Cost Change
Product Margin Change
Service Sales Margin Change
Client Profit for Service Sales Volume Change
Service Sales Volume Change
Invest Cost Change
Client Profit for Fixed Cost Change
Client Profit for Service Sales Margin Change
Fixed Cost Change
50
13
80
4
-2
9
160
-15
165
-10
-5
30
15
120
6
0
15
160
-5
175
-30
-7
Momentum Strategy
Increased Value Strategy

Fig. 27

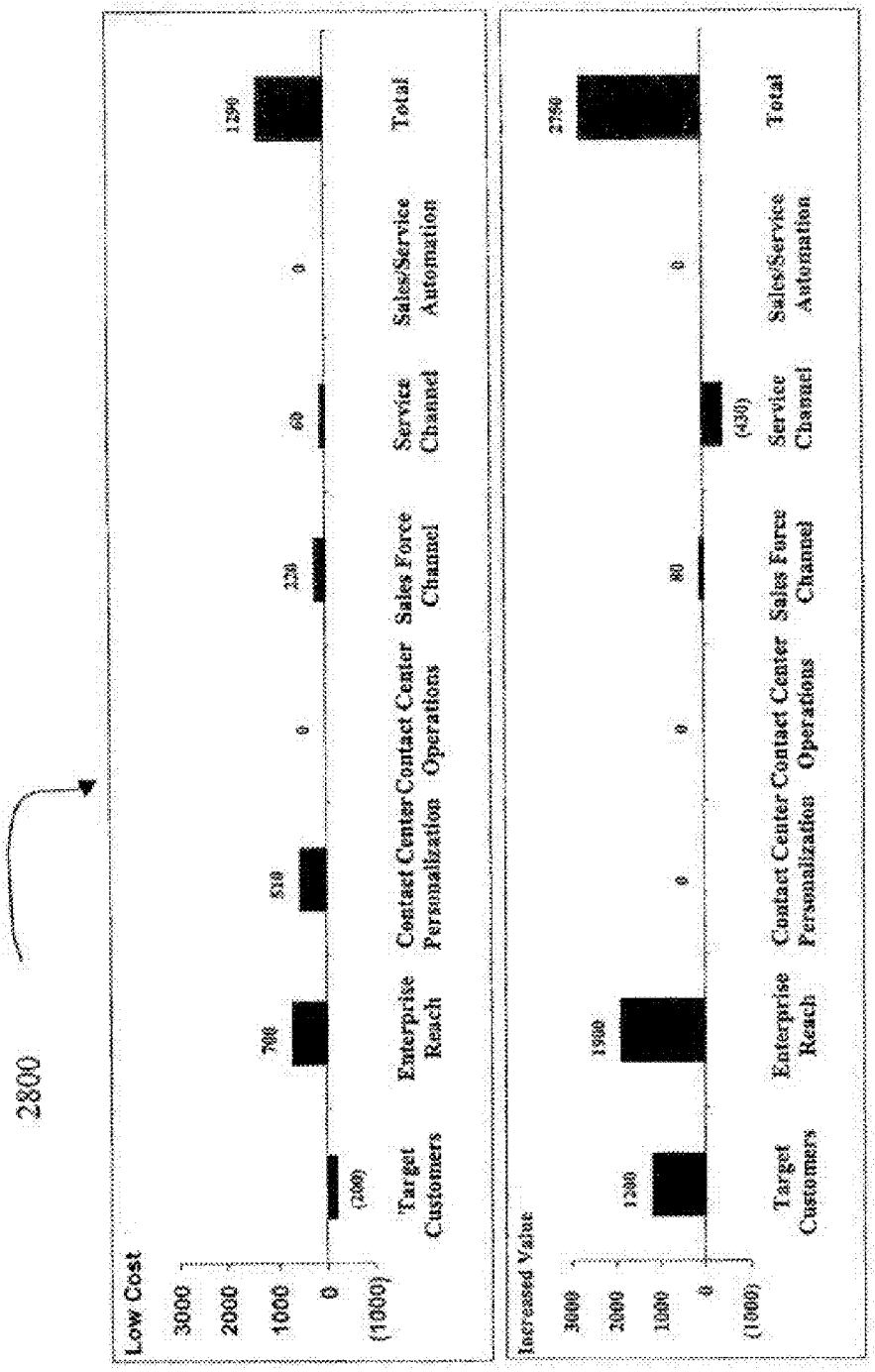

2800
Low Cost
3000
2000
1000
0
(1000)
(200)
700
510
0
220
60
0
1390
Target Customers
Enterprise Reach
Contact Center Personalization
Contact Center Operations
Sales Force Channel
Service Channel
Sales/Service Automation
Total
Increased Value
3000
2000
1000
0
(1000)
1200
1900
0
0
80
(430)
0
2750
Target Customers
Enterprise Reach
Contact Center Personalization
Contact Center Operations
Sales Force Channel
Service Channel
Sales/Service Automation
Total

Fig. 28

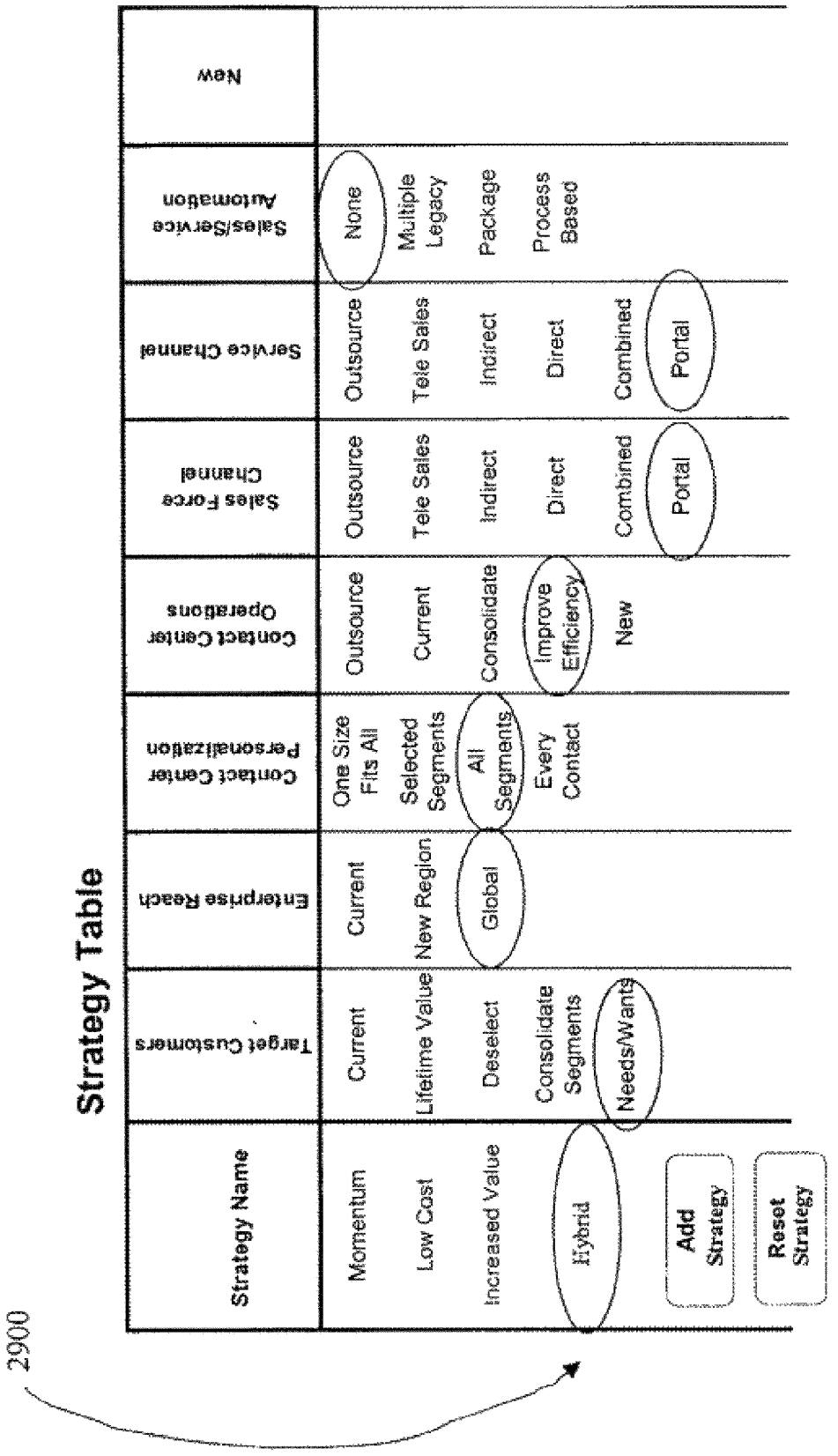
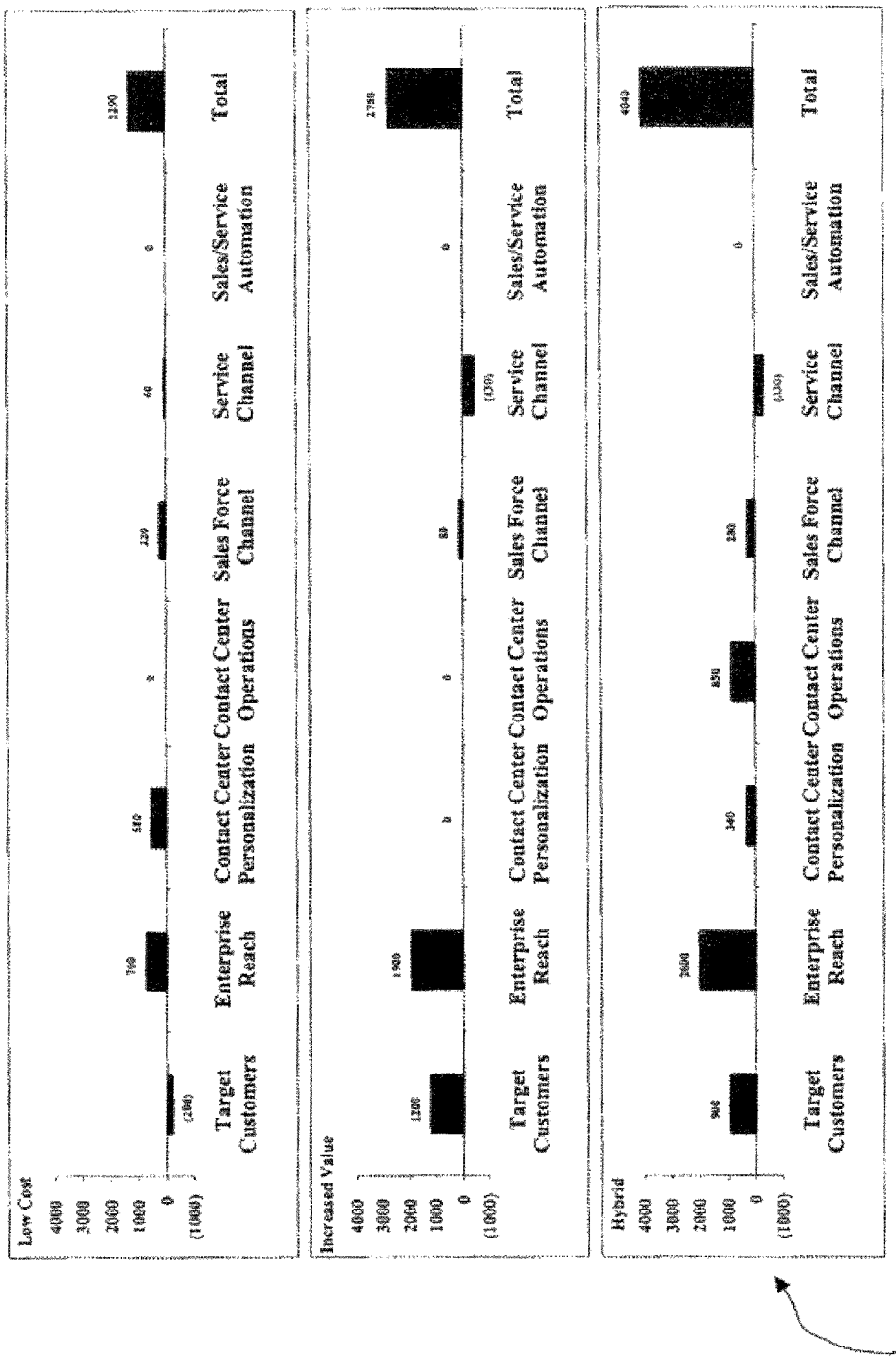

2900
Strategy Table
Strategy Name
Momentum
Low Cost
Increased Value
Hybrid
Target Customers
Current
Lifetime Value
Deselect
Consolidate Segments
Needs/Wants
Enterprise Reach
Current
New Region
Global
Contact Center Personalization
One Size Fits All
Selected Segments
All Segments
Every Contact
Contact Center Operations
Outsource
Current
Consolidate
Improve Efficiency
New
Sales Force Channel
Outsource
Tele Sales
Indirect
Direct
Combined
Portal
Service Channel
Outsource
Tele Sales
Indirect
Direct
Combined
Portal
Sales/Service Automation
None
Multiple Legacy
Package
Process Based
New
Add Strategy
Reset Strategy

Fig. 29


Low Cost
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
(1000)
Target Customers
Enterprise Reach
Contact Center Personalization
Contact Center Operations
Sales Force Channel
Service Channel
Sales/Service Automation
Total
Increased Value
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
(1000)
Target Customers
Enterprise Reach
Contact Center Personalization
Contact Center Operations
Sales Force Channel
Service Channel
Sales/Service Automation
Total
Hybrid
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
(1000)
Target Customers
Enterprise Reach
Contact Center Personalization
Contact Center Operations
Sales Force Channel
Service Channel
Sales/Service Automation
Total

3000

Fig. 30

SYSTEM, METHOD AND COMPUTER PROGRAM PRODUCT FOR A COLLABORATIVE DECISION PLATFORM

RELATED APPLICATION(S)

This is a continuation of co-pending prior application Ser. No. 11/828,129 filed on Jul. 25, 2007, which is a continuation of application Ser. No. 11/045,543 filed on Jan. 28, 2005, which has issued under U.S. Pat. No. 7,401,059, which is a continuation of application Ser. No. 09/708,154 filed on Nov. 7, 2000, which has issued under U.S. Pat. No. 6,876,991, and which claims the priority of a previously filed provisional application with the title "Collaborative Decision Platform" filed Nov. 8, 1999 under Ser. No. 60/163,984, which are each incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to decision making logic, and more particularly to a computer-based platform which supports a decision making process.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

One of the first recorded decision making processes was proposed in the 18th century when. Benjamin Franklin suggested a process by which one of two decision alternatives could be selected through listing advantages of the alternatives side by side and canceling out advantages or groups of advantages judged to be equal on both sides. Subsequently many decision processes have been proposed and are in use today. These include popular ones, such as Kepner-Tregoe where criteria for making the decision are listed and the alternatives are assessed (on a scale from 1 to 10) as to how they perform on each of the criteria. The criteria are also weighted on a similar scale and the best alternative is judged to be the highest dot product of the criteria weights and the respective assessments for the alternative against the criteria. Various modifications to this basic process in order to take into account complexities of having multiple decision makers, refining the assessment process through pair-wise comparison, etc., have resulted in many other such decision processes such as Value Management, Analytic Hierarchy Process, and others. There are also several methodologies (such as decision analyses using decision trees and probability methods) aimed at assisting a decision-maker think, through the options one has in making a decision and potential outcomes of each option. However ninny of these decision processes are in fact not processes, but only individual tools to compare pre-defined alternatives within a pre-specified problem frame.

In order to create a process which enables multiple decision makers to make strategic decisions in organizationally and technically complex circumstances, the Dialogue Decision Process (DDP) was proposed as a sequence of four steps (framing, alternatives, analysis, connection) and is well described, in literature [Barabba, V. P., *Meeting of the Minds*, Harvard Business Press, and other sources].

However to date, a short-coming of the process above as well as other processes, is that there has been no way to ensure that it can be applied to any decision regardless of type, complexity or number of decision makers. Furthermore, there has been no software that supports the complete sequence of these steps since each decision tends to be unique. This has resulted in each instantiation of decision processes being tailored to a particular decision. In the case of DDP, this has resulted in the process being a relatively sophisticated tool only used in certain circumstances and only when facilitated by experienced practitioners.

There is therefore a need for a computer-implemented method which may be utilized for implementing DDP in different environments in a universal manner.

SUMMARY

A decision making system, method and computer program product are provided. Initially, a plurality of attributes is defined. Thereafter, first information regarding the attributes is received from a receiving business. Second information is then received regarding proposed products or services in terms of the attributes. Such second information is received from a supplying business. In use, a decision process is executed based on the first information and the second information.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** illustrates a method for providing a collaborative decision platform adapted to run on a computer;

FIG. **1***a* illustrates a system by which the method of FIG. **1** may be carried out;

FIG. **1***b* illustrates a networked decision making environment in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **2** shows a representative hardware environment on which the collaborative decision platform of FIG. **1***a* ma be implemented;

FIG. **3** illustrates an example of Framing in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **3***a* illustrates various logic associated with the Framing process of the present invention;

FIG. **4** illustrates an example of Alternatives in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **4***a* illustrates various logic associated with the Alternatives process of the present invention which is capable of handling its various input for the purpose of generating a strategy table;

FIG. **5** illustrates an example of Analysis in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **5***a* illustrates various logic associated with the Analysis process of the present invention;

FIG. **6** illustrates an example of Connection in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **6***a* illustrates various logic associated with the Connection process of the present invention;

FIG. **7** illustrates the various connectivity between the various inputs and outputs of the Framing, Alternatives, Analysis, and Connection logic that comprises the users' interface;

FIGS. **8***a-i* illustrate an example of an application of the various logic components set forth in FIGS. **3-7**;

FIG. **9** illustrates a method for affording customer-centric collaborative decision making in a business-to-business framework;

FIGS. **9***a* and **10** illustrates tables associated with the method of FIG. **9**;

FIG. **11** is a schematic diagram showing the customer-centric collaborative protocol;

FIG. **12** illustrates a first example of the embodiment set forth in FIG. **11**;

FIG. **13** illustrates a second example of the embodiment set forth in FIG. **11**.

FIGS. **14** and **15** illustrate third and fourth examples, respectively, of the embodiment set forth in FIG. **11**, where an industry independent, open and scalable platform is provided for business-to business exchange of existing goods and services that are not commodities;

FIG. **16** illustrates a fifth example of the embodiment set forth in FIG. **11**, where an industry independent, open and scalable platform is provided for B2B real-time collaboration in the definition of future, non-existent goods and services;

FIGS. **17** and **18** illustrate sixth and seventh examples, respectively, of the embodiment set forth in FIG. **11**, where a new business design is provided that assists business-to-business enterprises in measuring the value creation for its customers; and

FIGS. **19** through **30** illustrate an exemplary application of the customer centric collaborative protocol.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIG. **1** illustrates a method **100** for providing a collaborative decision platform adapted to run on a computer. Initially, an application capable of performing decision logic is executed. See operation **102**.

Information is then retrieved from a database in accordance with the decision logic, as indicated in operation **104**. Information is then delivered to and received from a user in accordance with the decision logic utilizing a user interface. Note operation **106**. The information is then processed in operation **108** utilizing the decision logic.

In use, the foregoing steps are carried out by a collaborative decision platform capable of retrieving and receiving the information, and processing such information for different purposes by executing different applications each capable of performing different decision logic. Note operation **110**. It should be noted that the various steps set forth hereinabove ma be carried out using universal modules capable of interfacing with different applications.

FIG. **1***a* illustrates a system **120** by which the foregoing method of FIG. **1** may be carried out. As shown, a collaborative decision platform **122** is provided which has an interface **125** with at least one application **124** for executing the decision logic, as set forth in operation **102** of FIG. **1**. Further included, is a database **126**, which has an interface **127** with the collaborative decision platform **122** in accordance with operation **104** of FIG. **1**. Further, a user interface **128** is provided for receiving information from and providing information to the users. The interfaces **125**, **127**, and **128** are defined by the collaborative decision platform **122**. The users may be an important element of the system **120**. Note the two-headed arrow representing the users' interface **128** with the collaborative decision platform **122** to indicate the interaction, while the single arrowhead of the interface **125** and **127** indicates input. Note operation **106** of FIG. **1**. The collaborative decision platform **122** may be run on any type of hardware architecture **130**.

As set forth earlier, the various steps of FIG. **1** may be carried out using universal modules capable of interfacing with different applications. Such different applications **124** may be capable of performing decision logic relating to any type of decision-making process (e.g. financial, medical, buying a house, selecting a corporate strategy, etc.). In use, the collaborative decision platform **122** enables decision-making processes through the sequence and connectivity of a set of common displays, which describes the decision to be made. The collaborative decision platform **122** further enables asynchronous, remote decision-making processes, i.e. the ability to have different people input data into the set of common displays at different times, and from different places. Further, the database **126** may take the form of any one or a plurality of databases which may or may not be interconnected via a network such as the Internet. To this end, the present embodiment is designed to foster clear and conscientious decision-making.

FIG. **1***b* illustrates a plurality of network **130** of decision environments for allowing enterprises to learn more rapidly and coordinate more effectively. Such a network of decision environments each include at least one collaborative user interface which each communicate with an enterprise learning and coordination module **132** that may include one or more collaborative decision platforms **122**. Such a network **130** may allow the decision environments to be a physical arrangement optimized for human decision making or a virtual environment consisting of only the computer hardware and the collaborative decision platform **122**.

FIG. **2** shows a representative hardware environment on which the collaborative decision platform **122** of FIG. **1***a* may be implemented. Such figure illustrates a typical hardware configuration of a workstation in accordance with a preferred embodiment having a central processing unit **210**, such as a microprocessor, and a number of other units interconnected via a system bus **212**.

The workstation shown in FIG. **2** includes a Random Access Memory (RAM) **214**., Read Only Memory (ROM) **216**, an I/O adapter **218** for connecting peripheral devices such as disk storage units **220** to the bus **212**, a user interface adapter **222** for connecting a keyboard **224**, a mouse **226**, a speaker **228**, a microphone **232**, and/or other user interface devices such as a touch screen (not shown to the bus **212**, communication adapter **234** for connecting the workstation to a communication network **235** (e.g. a data processing network) and a display adapter **236** for connecting the bus **212** to a display device **238**.

The workstation typically has resident thereon an operating system such as the Microsoft Windows NT or Windows/95 Operating System (OS), the IBM OS/2 operating system, the MAC OS, or UNIX operating system. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the present invention may also be implemented on platforms and operating systems other than those mentioned.

A preferred embodiment is written using JAVA, C, and the C++ language and utilizes object oriented programming methodology. Object oriented programming (OOP) has become increasingly used to develop complex applications. As OOP moves toward the mainstream of software design and development, various software solutions require adaptation to make use of the benefits of OOP. A need exists for these principles of OOP to be applied to a messaging interface of an electronic messaging system such that a set of OOP classes and objects for the messaging interface can be provided.

OOP is a process of developing computer software using objects, including the steps of analyzing the problem, designing the system, and constructing the program. An object is a software package that contains both data and a collection of related structures and procedures. Since it contains both data and a collection of structures and procedures, it can be visualized as a self-sufficient component that does not require other additional structures, procedures or data to perform its specific task. OOP, therefore, views a computer program as a collection of largely autonomous components, called objects, each of which is responsible for a specific task. This concept of packaging data, structures, and procedures together in one component or module is called encapsulation.

In general, OOP components are reusable software modules which present an interface that conforms to an object

model and which are accessed at run-time through a component integration architecture. A component integration architecture is a set of architecture mechanisms which allow software modules in different process spaces to utilize each other's capabilities or functions. This is generally done by assuming a common component object model on which to build the architecture. It is worthwhile to differentiate between an object and a class of objects at this point. An object is a single instance of the class of objects, which is often just called a class. A class of objects can be viewed, as a blueprint, from which many objects can be formed.

OOP allows the programmer to create an object that is a part of another object. For example, the object representing a piston engine is said to have a composition-relationship with the object representing a piston. In reality, a piston engine comprises a piston, valves and many other components; the fact that a piston is an element of a piston engine can be logically and semantically represented in OOP by two objects.

OOP also allows creation of an object that "depends from" another object. If there are two objects, one representing a piston engine and the other representing a piston engine wherein the piston is made of ceramic, then the relationship between the two objects is not that of composition. A ceramic piston engine does not make up a piston engine. Rather it is merely one kind of piston engine that has one more limitation than the piston engine; its piston is made of ceramic. In this case, the object representing the ceramic piston engine is called a derived object, and it inherits all of the aspects of the object representing, the piston engine and adds further limitation or detail to it. The object representing the ceramic piston engine "depends from" the object representing the piston engine. The relationship between these objects is called inheritance.

When the object or class representing the ceramic piston engine inherits all of the aspects of the objects representing the piston engine, it inherits the thermal characteristics of a standard piston defined in the piston engine class. However, the ceramic piston engine object overrides these ceramic specific thermal characteristics, which are typically different from those associated with a metal piston. It skips over the original and uses new functions related to ceramic pistons. Different kinds of piston engines have different characteristics, but may have the same underlying functions associated with it (e.g., how many pistons in the engine, ignition sequences, lubrication, etc). To access each of these functions in any piston engine object, a programmer would call the same functions with the same names, but each type of piston engine may have different/overriding implementations of functions behind the same name. This ability to hide different implementations of a function behind the same name is called polymorphism and it greatly simplifies communication among objects.

With the concepts of composition-relationship, encapsulation, inheritance and polymorphism, an object can represent just about anything in the real world. In fact, one's logical perception of the reality is the only limit on determining the kinds of things that can become objects in object-oriented software. Some typical categories are as follows:

- Objects can represent physical objects, such as automobiles in a traffic-flow simulation, electrical components in a circuit-design program, countries in an economics model, or aircraft in an air-traffic-control system.
- Objects can represent elements of the computer-user environment such as windows, menus or graphics objects.
- An object can represent an inventory, such as a personnel file or a table of the latitudes and longitudes of cities.
- An object can represent user-defined data types such as time, angles, and complex numbers, or points on the plane.

With this enormous capability of an object to represent just about any logically separable matters. OOP allows the software developer to design and implement a computer program that is a model of some aspects of reality, whether that reality is a physical emit, a process, a system, or a composition of matter. Since the object can represent anything, the software developer can create an object which can be used as a component in a larger software project in the future.

If 90% of a new OOP software program consists of proven, existing components made from preexisting reusable objects, then only the remaining 10% of the new software project has to be written and tested from scratch. Since 90% already came from an inventory of extensively tested reusable objects, the potential domain from which an error could originate is 10% of the program. As a result, OOP enables software developers to build objects out of other, previously built objects.

This process closely resembles complex machinery being built out of assemblies and sub-assemblies. OOP technology, therefore, makes software engineering more like hardware engineering in that software is built from existing components, which are available to the developer as objects. All this adds up to an improved quality of the software as well as an increased speed of its development.

Programming languages are beginning to fully support the OOP principles, such as encapsulation, inheritance, polymorphism, and composition-relationship. With the advent of the C++ language, many commercial software developers have embraced OOP. C++ is an OOP language that offers a fast, machine-executable code. Furthermore. C++ is suitable for both commercial-application and systems-programming projects. For now, C++ appears to be the most popular choice among many OOP programmers, but there is a host of other OOP languages, such as Smalltalk, Common Lisp Object System (CLOS), and Eiffel. Additionally, OOP capabilities are being added to more traditional popular computer programming languages such as Pascal.

The benefits of object classes can be summarized, as follows:

- Objects and their corresponding classes break down complex programming problems into many smaller, simpler problems.
- Encapsulation enforces data abstraction through the organization of data into small, independent objects that can communicate with each other. Encapsulation protects the data in an object from accidental damage, but allows other objects to interact with that data by calling the object's member functions and structures.
- Subclassing and inheritance make it possible to extend and modify objects through deriving new kinds of objects from the standard classes available in the system. Thus, new capabilities are created without having to start from scratch.
- Polymorphism and multiple inheritance make it possible for different programmers to mix and match characteristics of many different classes and create specialized objects that can still work with related objects in predictable ways.
- Class hierarchies and containment hierarchies provide as flexible mechanism for modeling real-world objects and the relationships among them.
- Libraries of reusable classes are useful in many situations, but they also have some limitations. For example:

Complexity. In a complex system, the class hierarchies for related classes can become extremely confusing, with many dozens or even hundreds of classes.

Flow of control. A program written with the aid of class libraries is still responsible for the flow of control it must control the interactions among all the objects created from a particular library). The programmer has to decide which functions to call at what times for which kinds of objects.

Duplication of effort. Although class libraries allow programmers to use and reuse many small pieces of code, each programmer puts those pieces together in a different way. Two different programmers can use the same set of class libraries to write two programs that do exactly the same thing but whose internal structure (i.e., design) may be quite different, depending on hundreds of small decisions each programmer makes along the way. Inevitably, similar pieces of code end up doing similar things in slightly different ways and do not work as well together as they should.

Class libraries are very flexible. As programs grow more complex, more programmers are forced to reinvent basic solutions to basic problems over and over again. A relatively new extension of the class library concept is to have a framework of class libraries. This framework is more complex and consists of significant collections of collaborating classes that capture both the small scale patterns and major mechanisms that implement the common requirements and design in a specific application domain. They were first developed to free application programmers from the chores involved in displaying menus, windows, dialog boxes, and other standard user interface elements for personal computers.

Frameworks also represent a change in the way programmers think about the interaction between the code they write and code written by others. In the early days of procedural programming, the programmer called libraries provided by the operating system to perform certain tasks, but basically the program executed down the page from start to finish, and the programmer was solely responsible for the flow of control. This was appropriate for printing out paychecks, calculating a mathematical table, or solving other problems with a program that executed in just one way.

The development of graphical user interfaces began to turn this procedural programming arrangement inside out. These interfaces allow the user, rather than program logic, to drive the program and decide when certain actions should be performed. Today, most personal computer software accomplishes this by means of an event loop which monitors the mouse, keyboard, and other sources of external events and calls the appropriate parts of the programmer's code according to actions that the user performs. The programmer no longer determines the order in which events occur. Instead, a program is divided into separate pieces that are called at unpredictable times and in an unpredictable order. By relinquishing control in this way to users, the developer creates a program that is much easier to use. Nevertheless, individual pieces of the program written by the developer still call libraries provided by the operating system to accomplish certain tasks, and the programmer must still determine the flow of control within each piece after it's called by the event loop. Application code still "sits on top of" the system.

Even event loop programs require programmers to write a lot of code that should not need to be written separately for every application. The concept of an application framework carries the event loop concept further. Instead of dealing with all the nuts and bolts of constructing basic menus, windows, and dialog boxes and then making these things all work together, programmers using application frameworks start with working application code and basic user interface elements in place. Subsequently, they build from there by replacing some of the generic capabilities of the framework with the specific capabilities of the intended application.

Application frameworks reduce the total amount of code that a programmer has to write from scratch. However, because the framework is really a generic application that displays windows, supports copy and paste, and so on, the programmer can also relinquish control to a greater degree than event loop programs permit. The framework code takes care of almost all event handling and flow of control, and the programmer's code is called only when the framework needs it (e.g., to create or manipulate a proprietary data structure).

A programmer writing a framework program not only relinquishes control to the user (as is also true for event loop programs), but also relinquishes the detailed flow of control within the program to the framework. This approach allows the creation of more complex systems that work together in interesting ways, as opposed to isolated programs, having custom code, being created over and over again for similar problems.

Thus, as is explained above, a framework basically is a collection of cooperating classes that make up a reusable design solution for a given problem domain. It typically includes objects that provide default behavior (e.g., for menus and windows), and programmers use it by inheriting some of that default behavior and overriding other behavior so that the framework calls application code at the appropriate times.

There are three main differences between frameworks and class libraries:

Behavior versus protocol. Class libraries are essentially collections of behaviors that you can call when You want those individual behaviors in your program. A framework, on the other hand, provides not only behavior but also the protocol or set of rules that govern the ways in which behaviors can be combined, including rules for what a programmer is supposed to provide versus what the framework provides.

Call versus override. With a class library, the code the programmer instantiates objects and calls their member functions. It's possible to instantiate and call objects in the same way with a framework (i.e., to treat the framework as a class library), but to take full advantage of a framework's reusable design, a programmer typically writes code that overrides and is called by the framework. The framework manages the flow of control among its objects. Writing a program involves dividing responsibilities among the various pieces of software that are called by the framework rather than specifying how the different pieces should work together.

Implementation versus design. With class libraries, programmers reuse only implementations, whereas with frameworks, they reuse design. A framework embodies the way a family of related programs or pieces of software work. It represents a generic design solution that can be adapted to a variety of specific problems in a given domain. For example, a single framework can embody the way a user interface works, even though two different user interfaces created with the same framework might solve quite different interface problems.

Thus, through the development of frameworks for solutions to various problems and programming tasks, significant reductions in the design and development effort for software can be achieved. A preferred embodiment of the invention utilizes HyperText Markup Language (HTML) to implement documents on the Internet together with a general-purpose

secure communication protocol for a transport medium between the client and the Newco. HTTP or other protocols could be readily substituted for HTML without undue experimentation. Information on these products is available in T. Berners-Lee, D. Connoly, "RFC 1866: Hypertext Markup Language—2.0" (November 1995); and R. Fielding. H. Frystyk, T. Berners-Lee, J. Gettys and J. C. Mogul, "Hypertext Transfer Protocol—HTTP/1.1: HTTP Working Group Internet Draft" May 2, 1996). HTML is a simple data format used to create hypertext documents that are portable from one platform to another. HTML documents are SGML documents with generic semantics that are appropriate for representing information from a wide range of domains. HTML has been in use by the World-Wide Web global information initiative since 1990. HTML is an application of ISO Standard 8879; 1986 Information Processing Text and Office Systems; Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML).

To date, Web development tools have been limited in their ability to create dynamic Web applications which span from client to server and intemperate with existing computing resources. Until recently, HTML has been the dominant technology used in development of Web-based solutions. However, HTML has proven to be inadequate in the following areas:

Poor performance;

Restricted user interface capabilities;

can only produce static Web pages;

Lack of interoperability with existing applications and data; and

Inability to scale.

Sun Microsystem's Java language solves many of the client-side problems by:

Improving performance on the client side;

Enabling the creation of dynamic, real-time Web applications; and

Providing the ability to create a wide variety of user interface components.

With Java, developers can create robust User Interface (UI) components. Custom "widgets" (e.g., real-time stock tickers, animated icons, etc.) can be created, and client-side performance is improved. Unlike HTML, Java supports the notion of client-side validation, offloading appropriate processing onto the client for improved performance. Dynamic, real-time Web pages can be created. Using the above-mentioned custom UI components, dynamic Web pages can also be created.

Suns Java language has emerged as an industry-recognized language for "programming the Internet." Sun defines Java as "a simple, object-oriented, distributed, interpreted, robust, secure, architecture-neutral, portable, high-performance, multithreaded, dynamic, buzzword-compliant, general-purpose programming language. Java supports programming for the Internet in the form of platform-independent Java applets." Java applets are small, specialized applications that comply with Sun's Java Application Programming Interface (API) allowing developers to add "interactive content" to Web documents (e.g., simple animations, page adornments, basic games, etc.). Applets execute within a Java-compatible browser (e.g., Netscape Navigator) by copying code from the server to client. From a language standpoint, Java's core feature set is based on C++. Sun's Java literature states that Java is basically. "C++ with extensions from Objective C for more dynamic method resolution."

Another technology that provides similar function to JAVA is provided by Microsoft and ActiveX Technologies, to give developers and Web designers wherewithal to build dynamic content for the Internet and personal computers. ActiveX includes tools for developing animation, 3-D virtual reality, video and other multimedia content. The tools use Internet standards, work on multiple platforms, and are being supported by over 100 companies, The group's building blocks are called ActiveX Controls, small, fast components that enable developers to embed parts of software in hypertext markup language (HTML) pages. ActiveX Controls work with a variety of programming languages including Microsoft Visual C++, Borland Delphi, Microsoft Visual Basic programming system and, in the future, Microsoft's development tool for Java, code named "Jakarta," ActiveX Technologies also includes ActiveX Server Framework, allowing developers to create server applications. One of ordinary skill in the art readily recognizes that ActiveX could be substituted for JAVA without undue experimentation to practice the invention.

It should be noted that, in one embodiment, the information database and the common displays may all be treated as objects by the platform. As such, the foregoing technology may be utilized in the implementation of the overall system, as embodied in FIG. **1***a*.

Preferred Embodiment

The platform of the present embodiment acts as a "decision engine" which drives the decision process through a sequence of logical steps to a conclusion. The users interface during these steps is the set of common displays exhibited by the platform. The users receive and provide specific decision information to the platform by entering or modifying the structure of the decision and the decision-relevant information in the display areas where appropriate. In order to start the process, the platform hosts a decision application which provides the structure for the type of decision that the user wants to make. The application and platform communicate through a standard interlace protocol. The platform guides the user through four steps (framing, alternatives, analysis and connection), but these are tailored to the decision at hand through the decision application.

FIG. **3** illustrates an example of Framing **300** in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. The purpose of Framing is to clearly communicate to the users the capabilities of the chosen decision application **124** and to allow the users to modify the problem definition to the extent that the capability for modification has been incorporated by the authors of the application. During Framing, the specific decision application provides certain key pieces of information about the decision at hand as input in a specific format or protocol **125** specified by the collaborative decision platform **122** that describe the capabilities of that application. Such input may include the policies that form boundary conditions for the decision, the strategic decisions that can be made, the values that are important to the decision makers, the uncertainties that may impact the values desired, and the relationship of the above elements.

The Framing process, using this key input from the decision application **1124** in the specific format **125**, generates visual displays of a decision hierarchy **304** and an influence diagram **306**, to be confirmed or modified by the users. The users' information **129** is seen as an input to the framing process **300**, because the users interact with the platform **122** to produce a resultant decision hierarchy **304** and the influence diagram **306** that capture their collective view of the decision problem. Note the two-headed arrow representing the users' interface **128** with the collaborative decision platform **122** to indicate the interaction, while the single arrow head of the interface **125** indicates input. In the event that the

users are unable to successfully represent the decision problem as they see it with the initial decision application, they will select another application **124** and repeat the Framing process **300**.

FIG. **3***a* illustrates various logic **310** associated, with the Framing process of the present invention. As shown, a first Framing module **314** receives information from the decision application **124**, such as the specific policies, decisions (controllables) and tactics that it can accommodate with a logical structure. The first framing module **314** orders the precedence of decisions to output the decision hierarchy **304**. Decisions that have already been made are referred to as "policy," as set of one or more decisions of immediate interest are referred to as "strategy" or "strategic decisions" or just "decisions," and decisions that can be deferred until later are referred to as "tactics." The users confirm or modify **129** the policies, decisions and tactics. For example, the users may not want to address a particular decision at this time, in which case it would become a tactic.

Working in parallel with the first Framing module **314** is a second Framing module **316**. Such second Framing module **316** receives as input pertinent uncertainties or risks (uncontrollables), information sources and values that further describe the capabilities of the decision application **124**. The second Framing module **316** also receives as input the decisions identified by the first Framing module **314** and users' confirmation or modification **129** of the values, information sources and uncertainties. With such, the second Framing module **316** structures a relationship of decisions, values and uncertainties in form of the influence diagram and a corresponding directory to sources of information **306**.

FIG. **4** illustrates an example of Alternatives **400** in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. The purpose of the Alternatives process is to develop a set of strategic alternatives that capture the range of possibilities envisioned by the users. After Framing, the platform moves to Alternatives, and receives from the decision application **124** and the information data base **126** alternative strategies each comprised of a set of coherent choices for each of the strategic decision. The users confirm or modify **129** the alternative strategies. The platform generates the visual display of the strategies defined on a strategy table **402**.

FIG. **4***a* illustrates various logic **406** associated with the Alternatives process of the present invention which is capable of generating several strategies defined on a strategy table **402**. Included with the Alternatives logic **406** is a first Alternatives module **410** that receives the decision hierarchy **304** generated by the Framing logic **310**. The first Alternatives module **410** obtains decision alternatives in each of the decision areas from the decision application **124** and from an information database **126** for the purpose of developing a strategy table. Each (strategic) decision from the decision hierarchy **304** becomes a column heading in the strategy table **402** with the alternatives for that decision arranged in a column beneath it. The first Alternatives module **410** also takes as input the users confirmation or modification **129** of the decision alternatives.

A second Alternatives module **412** combines the strategy table output of the first Alternatives module **410** with strategy descriptions from the decision application **124**. The strategy descriptions include a strategy, name and the selection of one alternative for each of the decisions that comprise the column headings in the strategy table **402**. The second Alternatives module **412** can then display the strategies on a strategy table and incorporate the users' confirmation or modifications **129**. For example, the users may want to define their own strategy, which they would do by providing the second Alternatives module **412** with a strategy name and the selection of and alternative in each column of the strategy table **402**.

FIG. **5** illustrates an example of Analysis **500** in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. The purpose of the Analysis process is to enable the users to have a shared understanding of the significant sources of risk and value in each of the initially defined alternative strategies. During Analysis, the platform prompts the information database **126** for assessments on each of the uncertainties set forth in a format **127** specified as low estimate, nominal estimate, and high estimate. These assessments are made for uncertainties influenced by the choice of decision, as well as independent uncertainties.

Using the information generated previously and the model structure of the decision application **124**, the platform makes the necessary calculations to output tornado diagrams **502** and decision sensitivity output displays for each of the alternative strategies **509**. The users confirm or modify the input information **129** and structure from the decision application **124**. The tornado diagrams identify the sources of significant risk in each alternative strategy and the decision sensitivity identifies the sources of significant value in each alternative strategy.

FIG. **5***a* illustrates various logic **506** associated with the Analysis process of the present invention. As shown, a first Analysis module **508** receives as input the influence diagram **306**, identifying uncertainties and their relationship to the value and the decisions. The influence diagram also includes an information directory, which specifies the information database(s) **126** that will provide the decision-relevant information. This first Analysis module **508** also receives as input from the information data base(s) **126** assessed ranges or probabilities for each of the uncertainties identified by the influence diagram **306** generated using the Framing logic **310**. These data ranges are confirmed or modified by the users **129**.

The output of the first Analysis module **508** is further used by a second Analysis module **514**. The second Analysis module **514** takes as input the structural relationship of decisions, values and uncertainties from the decision application **124**. An example of such a structural relationship is a spreadsheet comprised of equations relating decisions, values and uncertainties. This output is, in turn, used to generate the tornado diagram **502** by varying each of the uncertainties over its range and recording the effect on value.

In parallel with the first and second Analysis modules is a third Analysis module **510** that takes as input the strategies defined on the strategy table **402**, the output of the first Analysis module **508** and the structural relationship of decisions, values and uncertainties from the decision application **124**. With such input, the third Analysis module **510** identifies a contribution to the total value of each alternative for each decision that comprises each strategy. Given this information, a decision sensitivity table **509** may be constructed.

FIG. **6** illustrates an example of Connection **600** in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. The purpose of Connection is for the users to develop a new, more valuable "hybrid" strategy **602** combining the most valuable decisions in each of the initially, defined alternative strategies. During Connection, the users' insight into the sources of risk and value **129** interacts with new decision relevant information from the database **126** and the decision structure provided by the decision application **124** to output an evaluation of the hybrid strategy **602**.

FIG. **6***a* illustrates various logic **604** associated with the Connection process of the present invention. As shown, the logic **604** includes a first Connection module **606** which

receives as input a value contribution of each alternative for each decision that comprise each strategy, the decision sensitivity **509** generated by the Analysis logic **506**. The first connection module **606** also receives as input user insight **129** regarding how to combine the sources of value into a new, more valuable hybrid strategy. A second logic module **608** of the connection logic **604** takes as input the users' insight **129** about additional information sources that could reduce the significant uncertainties or risks identified in the tornado diagram **502**. This second Connection module **608** then selects that new information from an appropriate decision relevant database (perhaps one not previously used for this decision problem) **126**. The description of the new hybrid alternative from the first Connection module **606** and the new risk reducing information from the second Connection module **608** are input to a third module **610**. This third module **610** uses the structural relationship of decisions, values and uncertainties (e.g., spreadsheet) from the decision application **124** to output the value of the hybrid strategy **602**.

FIG. **7** illustrates the various logical connectivity among the various common displays of the Framing, Alternatives, Analysis, and Connection that comprise the users' interface **128**.

FIGS. **8***a-i* illustrate an example of an application of the various logic components set forth in FIGS. **3-7**. As shown, such illustrative application of the collaborative decision platform relates to an individual and his/her spouse, the users, selecting a strategy for participation an employer's stock purchase program. Initially, the collaborative decision platform executes a decision application selected by the users for developing stock purchase strategies.

In the Framing process, the collaborative decision platform uses input from the decision application to present the users with an initial decision hierarchy, which the users confirm or modify. The collaborative decision platform produces the resulting decision hierarchy **800**, shown in FIG. **8***a*, as an output, which identifies the decisions that are within the scope of the current decision making process.

The collaborative decision platform also uses input from the decision application to present the users with an initial influence diagram, which the users confirm or modify. The influence diagram identifies the critical uncertainties or risks, the decisions and the values that are important to the users, and it displays the relationships among them. The users confirm or modify the influence diagram. The collaborative decision platform produces the resulting influence diagram **802**, shown in FIG. **8***b*, as another output. Note that a directory of information sources **803** is included with the influence diagram.

The users are allowed to modify the influence diagram and the decision hierarchy only to the extent that the modifications were anticipated by the author of the application. This restriction assures that the alternative strategies that are defined in the Alternatives process can be analyzed with the spreadsheet provided by the decision application.

In the Alternatives process, the collaborative decision platform uses input from the decision application to present the users with an initial strategy table that is consistent with the decision hierarchy, which the users confirm or modify. One or more strategy names and their corresponding definitions on the strategy table are also presented to the users. The users may confirm or modify the strategies, including developing new strategies. The resulting strategy alternatives are displayed on strategy tables **804**, as shown in FIGS. **8***c* and **8***d*.

In the Analysis process, ranges on each uncertainty or risk **806**, as shown in FIG. **8***e*, are input from the specified decision-relevant databases **803** of FIG. **8***b*. The users may confirm or modify the ranges. The collaborative decision platform takes as input the spreadsheet residing in the decision application that includes equations and data relating the decisions and uncertainties to the value, which in this case is profit. The collaborative decision platform uses the spreadsheet, strategies and uncertainty ranges to produce the tornado diagram **808** and decision sensitivity **810** shown in FIGS. **8***f* and **8***g*.

In the connection process, the users define on the strategy table **804** a new, more valuable "hybrid" strategy **811** that combines the most valuable alternatives from each of the initially defined alternative strategies, as shown in FIG. **8***h*. In defining this hybrid strategy, the users are relying heavily on the shared insight and understanding from the tornado diagram and decision sensitivity. The collaborative decision platform uses the spreadsheet from the decision application to calculate the value of the hybrid **812**, as shown on FIG. **8***i*.

FIG. **9** illustrates a method **900** for affording customer-centric collaborative decision-making in a business-to-business framework. In one embodiment, the method **900** may be carried using the collaborative decision platform set forth hereinabove. In the alternative, the present method may be executed using any other desired architecture.

Initially, in operation **902**, a minimum set of attributes is defined. Thereafter, first information regarding each of the minimum set of attributes is received from a receiving business. Note operation **904**. Second information is then received regarding proposed products or services in terms of the minimum set of attributes, as indicated in operation **906**. Such second information is received from a supplying business.

In use, a decision process is executed based on the first information and the second information as to which products or services is suitable for the receiving business. Note operation **908**. The present embodiment thus provides a customer-centric collaborative protocol that defines the minimum informational requirement for collaborative decision-making between enterprises (B2B).

The customer-centric collaborative protocol exploits a commonality in the attributes of the value structure of many enterprises that is sufficient to assess the implications of many decisions. An illustrative minimum set of attributes could include: price, sales, variable cost, fixed cost and investment. For many strateuic decisions, knowing the affect of the decision on these attributes enables the enterprise to make an informed decision.

There are well-defined algorithms for the hierarchical expansion of each of the attributes in the minimum set in the event additional detail is required. When more detail is required, it may be nested within the higher level attributes. An expanded set of attributes could include: price, market share, market size, labor cost, material cost, administrative cost, annual expenses, working capital, plant and equipment, etc. The protocol or structure of the informational requirement is identical for a wide range of enterprises and many decisions within those enterprises, but the relative value of each attribute will be different. FIG. **9***a* illustrates a table **920** showing various customer-centric collaborative (C^3) attributes, and the value of a one-percent increases of such attributes in two different industries.

In accordance with the present invention, the supplying, enterprise is required to describe its alternatives in terms of their effect on the value attributes that matter to the receiving enterprise. FIG. **10** illustrates a table **1000** showing such an effect on the value attributes.

FIG. **11** is a schematic diagram showing the customer-centric collaborative (C^3) protocol. As set forth hereinabove,

the protocol defines the minimum informational requirement for decision making between enterprises (B2B). The value of improvements of each of the attributes is specified for a receiving enterprise **1100**. It should be noted that attributes are easily calculable for enterprises that focus on profit. However, even for enterprises that are not focused on profit, these same attributes are of critical importance. A supplying enterprise **1102** provides one or more alternative "attribute bundles" that describe products and services it is willing to deliver in terms of the attributes that matter to the receiving enterprise. An attribute bundle specifies how much of each attribute will be provided. It should be understood that the attribute levels can be assessed with little difficulty using for example an influence diagram. A decision module **1104** may then execute the method **900** of FIG. **9**. FIG. **1.2** illustrates a first example **1200** of the embodiment set forth in FIG. **11**. As shown, an industry independent, open and scalable platform may be provided that uses the customer-centric collaborative protocol for real-time, remote collaborative decision making among enterprises. The customer-centric collaborative protocol can be used with an architecture or process that supports collaborative decision-making, such as a collaborative decision platform **1202** which is similar to that set forth hereinabove.

FIGS. **13** and **14** illustrate a second and third example **1300** and **1400** of the embodiment set forth in FIG. **11**. In the embodiment of FIG. **13**, the customer-centric collaborative protocol and an architecture or process that supports collaborative decision making, such as the collaborative decision platform, may together enable an open, scalable, industry independent process for real-time, remote decision-making between a receiving enterprise **1302** and a supplying enterprise **1304**. As shown, the present embodiment may serve to negotiate an agreement **1306** to purchase and deliver the highest value combination of attributes. In a third embodiment shown in FIG. **14**, the customer-centric collaborative protocol and an architecture or process that supports collaborative decision making, such as the collaborative decision platform, may together enable an open, scalable, industry independent process for real-time, remote decision-making among a receiving enterprise **1402** and supplying enterprises **1404**. As shown, the present embodiment may serve to negotiate an agreement **1406** to purchase and deliver the highest value combination of attributes

FIG. **15** illustrates a fourth examples **1501**) of the embodiment set forth in FIG. **11**, where an industry independent, open and scalable platform is provided for B2B exchange of existing goods and services that are not commodities. In other words, an effective platform for a non-commodity exchange is afforded.

As shown in FIG. **15**, the alternative, attribute bundles **1501** can be offered by different enterprises **1504** and need not be commodities, but rather may differ on the level offered of every attribute. It should be understood that commodities are goods and services that can be defined without the information about or the interaction of the customer. As shown in FIG. **15**, the customer-centric collaborative protocol and an architecture or process that supports collaborative decision making, such as the collaborative decision platform, together enable an industry-independent, open and scalable platform for the real-time B2B exchange of existing goods and services **1506** that are not commodities.

FIG. **16** illustrates a fifth example **1600** of the embodiment set forth in FIG. **11**, where an industry independent, open and scalable platform is provided for B2B real-time collaboration in the definition of future, non-existent goods and services. As shown in FIG. **16**, the alternative attribute bundles **1601** can be offered by different enterprises and need not exist. Rather, they may represent proposals to deliver goods and services that could be developed in the future. As shown, an agreement **1606** may be negotiated to deliver the highest value combination of attributes in the future. FIGS. **17** and **18** illustrate sixth and seventh examples **1700** and **1800**, respectively, of the embodiment set forth in FIG. **11**, where a new business design is provided that assists B2B enterprises in measuring the value creation for its customers.

As shown in FIG. **17**, the customer-centric collaborative protocol and publicly available information **1702** may together enable a new business design that assists B2B enterprises in measuring the prospective value creation for its customers. With reference to FIG. **18**, a particular embodiment of that business design could include the customer-centric collaborative protocol, publicly available information **1702** and a collaborative decision platform **1802**, which together enable a new business design that assists B2B enterprises in measuring the retrospective value creation for its customers.

An exemplary application of a customer-centric collaborative protocol utilizing, the collaborative decision platform for the selection of a strategy for "Customer Relationship Management (CRM)" will now be set forth. In particular, the present B2B example relates to a receiving enterprise desirous of an improved CRM strategy and a supplying enterprise capable of delivering alternative CRM strategies.

In this case during the Framing process, the receiving enterprise provides the policies, which constrain the strategic alternatives. The supplying enterprise demonstrates its experience by offering a list of strategic decisions. The receiving enterprise believes that two of the decisions are tactical, i.e. can be made later. FIG. **19** illustrates the resulting decision hierarchy **1900** developed collaboratively and asynchronously. FIG. **20** shows the influence diagram **2000**, which identifies the critical uncertainties, the strategic decisions and the attributes **2020** that are of value to the receiving enterprise and which display the relationship among them. For two of the attributes, more detail is required and the higher level attributes are expanded hierarchically in those areas **2100** and **2200**, as shown in FIGS. **21** and **22**, respectively.

During the Alternatives process, three alternative strategies **2300**, **2302**, and **2304** are defined collaboratively on a strategy table in terms of the strategic decisions, as shown in FIGS. **23***a*, **23***b* and **23***c*, respectively. The strategy table developed remotely and asynchronously. The strategies are developed in the physical presence of both enterprises.

In the Analysis process, the supplying enterprise uses information from its database to assess the range of effect that the "Revenue Growth" strategy will have on each of the attributes **2410**. Note **2400** in FIG. **24**. Similar assessments are made for each of the other strategies. The receiving enterprise may establish its value for changes in each of the attributes as shown in the table **2500** of FIG. **25**.

The table **2600** in FIG. **26** shows the calculations performed inside the collaborative decision platform when the customer-centric collaborative protocol is used. As shown, the value of an alternative to the client can be estimated by multiplying the improvement in each attribute by the customer's value for changes in that attribute.

The remarkable simplicity of these calculations enables shared insight into the sources of risk and sources of value, which is displayed in the tornado diagram **2700** and decision sensitivity **2800** for each of the alternative strategies, as shown in FIGS. **27** and **28**, respectively. It should be noted

that different solutions might be appropriate for clients in different industries because of different client values for the C^3 attributes.

Using the shared understanding of the sources of risk and value in the initially defined alternative strategies, the supplying and receiving enterprise collaborate in developing a new, more valuable "hybrid" strategy **2900**, as shown in FIG. **29**. Its corresponding decision sensitivity **3000** of FIG. **30** compares the total value of the hybrid strategy with the initially defined alternatives and identifies its sources of value.

While various embodiments have been described above, it should be understood that they have been presented by way of example only, and not limitation. Thus, the breadth and scope of to preferred embodiment should not be limited by any of the above-described exemplary embodiments, but should be defined only in accordance with the following claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:

(a) defining a plurality of attributes to support a process that is related to decision-making and utilizes an application including at least one application that is a real estate-related application, a medical-related application, a corporate-related application, a product supply-related application, a service supply-related application, or a financial-related application;

(b) receiving first information regarding the attributes from a receiving business;

(c) receiving second information regarding proposed products or services in terms of the attributes, wherein the second information is received from a supplying business; and

(d) executing a decision process based on the first information and the second information;

wherein the process is capable of being executed using a system capable of: (i) retrieving stored information from a storage; (ii) receiving user information from a user utilizing a user interface; and (iii) processing the stored information and the user information for generating output of the processing; where one or more of (i)-(iii) are carried out utilizing, at least in part, one or more modules capable of accomplishing the one or more of (i)-(iii) for one or more purposes.

2. The method as recited in claim **1**, wherein the attributes include price, sales, variable costs, fixed cost and investment.

3. The method as recited in claim **2**, wherein the attributes further include market share, market size, labor cost, material cost, administrative cost, annual expenses, working capital, planning and equipment.

4. The method as recited in claim **1**, wherein the first information and second information are received utilizing a network.

5. The method as recited in claim **4**, wherein the network is the Internet.

6. A computer program product embodied on a computer readable medium, comprising:

computer code for causing execution of an application capable of being utilized in association with one or more attributes to support decision-making, the application including at least one application that is a real estate-related application, a medical-related application, a corporate-related application, a product supply-related application, a service supply-related application, or a financial-related application;

computer code for receiving first information regarding the one or more attributes in association with a receiving entity;

computer code for receiving second information regarding one or more products or services in terms of the one or more attributes; and

computer code for causing execution of a process that is related to the decision-making, based on the first information and the second information;

wherein the application is capable of being executed using a system capable of: (i) retrieving stored information from a storage; (ii) receiving user information from a user utilizing a user interface; and (iii) processing the stored information and the user information for generating output of the processing; where one or more of (i)-(iii) is carried out utilizing, at least in part, logic capable of accomplishing the one or more of (i)-(iii) for one or more purposes.

7. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the attributes include price, sales, variable costs, fixed cost, and investment.

8. The computer program product as recited in claim **7**, wherein the attributes further include market share, market size, labor cost, material cost, administrative cost, annual expenses, working capital, planning and equipment.

9. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the first information and second information are received utilizing a network.

10. The computer program product as recited in claim **9**, wherein the network is the Internet.

11. A system, comprising:

logic for executing an application capable being utilized in association with one or more attributes to support decision-making, the application including at least one application that is a real estate-related application, a medical-related application, a corporate-related application, a product supply-related application, a service supply-related application, or a financial-related application;

logic for receiving first information regarding the attributes from a receiving entity;

logic for receiving second information regarding proposed products or services in terms of the attributes, wherein the second information is associated with a supplying business; and

logic for executing a process that is related to decision-making, based on the first information and the second information;

wherein the application is capable of being executed in association with an entity capable of: (i) retrieving stored information from a storage; (ii) receiving user information from a user utilizing a user interface; and (iii) processing the stored information and the user information for generating output of the processing; where one or more of (i)-(iii) are carried out utilizing, at least in part, one or more modules capable of applying the one or more of (i)-(iii) differently.

12. The system as recited in claim **11**, wherein the attributes include price, sales, variable costs, fixed cost and investment.

13. The system as recited in claim **12**, wherein the attributes further include market share, market size, labor cost, material cost, administrative cost, annual expenses, working capital, planning and equipment.

14. The system as recited in claim **11**, wherein the first information and second information are received utilizing a network.

15. The system as recited in claim **14**, wherein the network is the Internet.

16. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the one or more attributes includes a plurality of the attributes.

17. The computer program product as recited in claim 16, wherein the plurality of the attributes are bundled.

18. The computer program product as recited in claim 16, further comprising computer code for hierarchical expansion of each of the attributes.

19. The computer program product as recited in claim 16, wherein the computer program product is operable such that a minimum set of the plurality of the attributes is required.

20. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the one or more attributes includes price.

21. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the one or more attributes relates to equipment.

22. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the one or more attributes includes price and relates to equipment.

23. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the one or more attributes includes an administrative cost.

24. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the one or more attributes includes at least one variable.

25. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the process includes a dialogue decision process.

26. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic includes decision logic.

27. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic is a component of the application.

28. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic is a component of a platform.

29. The computer program product as recited in claim 28, wherein the at least one application is separate from the platform.

30. The computer program product as recited in claim 28, wherein the platform is a decision platform.

31. The computer program product as recited in claim 28, wherein the platform is a collaborative decision platform.

32. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic is associated with a plurality of modules.

33. The computer program product as recited in claim 32, wherein the plurality of modules includes universal modules.

34. The computer program product as recited in claim 32, wherein the plurality of modules includes at least one of a framing module, an alternatives module, an analysis module, and a connection module.

35. The computer program product as recited in claim 32, wherein the plurality of modules includes a framing module.

36. The computer program product as recited in claim 32, wherein the plurality of modules includes an alternatives module.

37. The computer program product as recited in claim 32, wherein the plurality of modules includes an analysis module.

38. The computer program product as recited in claim 32, wherein the plurality of modules includes a connection module.

39. The computer program product as recited in claim 32, wherein the plurality of modules includes a framing module, an alternatives module, an analysis module, and a connection module.

40. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic is implemented utilizing software components including a software component that is capable of being used to initialize the process.

41. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic is implemented utilizing software components including a software component that is capable of being used to develop decision related alternatives in the process.

42. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic is implemented utilizing software components including a software component that is capable of being used to analyze alternatives in the process.

43. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic is implemented utilizing software components including a software component that is capable of being used to process decision-related alternatives to develop a solution.

44. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic is implemented utilizing software components including:

a first software component that is capable of being used to initialize the process,

a second software component that is capable of being used to develop decision-related alternatives in the process,

a third software component that is capable of being used to analyze the decision-related alternatives in the process, and

a fourth software component that is capable of being used to process the decision-related alternatives to develop a solution.

45. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic is implemented with hardware.

46. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic is implemented with software.

47. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein at least a portion of the computer code is carried out using modules capable of interfacing with different applications adapted for applying the universal modules differently.

48. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the process is performed in real-time.

49. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein input associated with the first information is received via a network.

50. The computer program product as recited in claim 49, wherein the network is the Internet.

51. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the second information is received via a network.

52. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic is industry-independent.

53. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic is performed by a collaborative decision platform.

54. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein at least a portion of the computer program product is implemented using modules capable of interfacing with different applications adapted for applying the modules to different sectors.

55. The computer program product as recited in claim 54, wherein the sectors include different business sectors that include at least one of a real estate-related business sector, medical-related business sector, corporate-related business sector, or financial-related business sector.

56. The computer program product as recited in claim 54, wherein an interface protocol is utilized to interface the different applications with the modules.

57. The computer program product as recited in claim 56, wherein the interface protocol includes a standard interface protocol.

58. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the process relates to a determination as to which of the products or services is suitable for the receiving entity.

59. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the products or services include products.

60. The computer program product as recited in claim 59, wherein the products include non-existent products.

61. The computer program product as recited in claim 59, wherein the products include existent products.

62. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the products or services include services.

63. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the first information regarding the one or more attributes is entered by the receiving entity.

64. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, further comprising computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the user to form at least one boundary condition associated with the decision-making.

65. The computer program product as recited in claim 64, wherein the at least one first interface that allows the user to form at least one boundary condition associated with the decision-making allows the user to form a plurality of boundary conditions.

66. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, further comprising computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the user to input at least one tactic associated with the decision-making.

67. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, further comprising computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the user to input at least one policy associated with the decision-making.

68. The computer program product as recited in claim 67, wherein the at least one first interface allows the user to enter at least one decision relating to the process.

69. The computer program product as recited in claim 67, wherein the at least one first interface allows the user to enter at least one decision relating to the process.

70. The computer program product as recited in claim 67, wherein the at least one first interface allows the user to enter at least one tactic relating to the process.

71. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, further comprising computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the user to form at least one boundary condition associated with the decision-making utilizing a menu.

72. The computer program product as recited in claim 64, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional first interface that allows the user to form at least one additional boundary condition associated with the decision-making.

73. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, further comprising computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the user to input important values associated with the decision-making.

74. The computer program product as recited in claim 73, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional first interface that allows the user to input additional important values associated with the decision-making.

75. The computer program product as recited in claim 74, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one first interface and the at least one additional first interface work in parallel in connection with at least one common display.

76. The computer program product as recited in claim 74, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the important values and the additional important values are capable of being modified.

77. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, further comprising computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the user to form at least one boundary condition associated with the decision-making, and allows the user to provide input associated with important aspects associated with the decision-making.

78. The computer program product as recited in claim 77, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one boundary condition and the important aspects are capable of being modified.

79. The computer program product as recited in claim 77, wherein the at least one first interface is an element of a framing interface.

80. The computer program product as recited in claim 77, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional first interface a content of which is a function of input provided using the at least one first interface.

81. The computer program product as recited in claim 77, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional first interface that allows the user to form at least one additional boundary condition associated with the decision-making, and allows the user to provide input associated with additional important aspects associated with the decision-making.

82. The computer program product as recited in claim 77, further comprising computer code for providing at least one second interface that displays a plurality of alternatives.

83. The computer program product as recited in claim 82, wherein the alternatives include alternate choices.

84. The computer program product as recited in claim 83, wherein the alternatives are displayed in a table.

85. The computer program product as recited in claim 84, wherein at least one aspect of input received from the user via the least one first interface drives a column heading in the table with the alternatives for the column heading arranged therebeneath.

86. The computer program product as recited in claim 83, further comprising computer code for confirming at least one of the alternatives.

87. The computer program product as recited in claim 83, further comprising computer code for modifying the alternatives.

88. The computer program product as recited in claim 83, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional second interface that displays the plurality of alternatives, as modified by user input.

89. The computer program product as recited in claim 83, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional second interface a content of which is a function of input provided using the at least one second interface.

90. The computer program product as recited in claim 83, further comprising computer code for providing at least one third interface that displays sources of value in each of the alternatives.

91. The computer program product as recited in claim 83, further comprising computer code for providing at least one third interface that allows the user to modify input information.

92. The computer program product as recited in claim 90, wherein the at least one third interface is an element of an analysis interface.

93. The computer program product as recited in claim 90, wherein the at least one third interface allows the user to modify a range of data.

94. The computer program product as recited in claim 90, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional third interface that provides a decision sensitivity display.

95. The computer program product as recited in claim 90, further comprising computer code for providing at least one

additional third interface a content of which is a function of input provided using the at least one third interface.

96. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, further comprising computer code for receiving third information that includes public information.

97. The computer program product as recited in claim **96**, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the third information is received from a source separate from the receiving entity and the supplying business.

98. The computer program product as recited in claim **96**, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the third information is utilized as a function of user input.

99. The computer program product as recited in claim **96**, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the third information is received from the receiving entity.

100. The computer program product as recited in claim **96**, wherein the third information relates to the one or more products or services.

101. The computer program product as recited in claim **96**, wherein the third information relates to a value of at least one aspect of the one or more products or services.

102. The computer program product as recited in claim **101**, wherein the at least one aspect of the one or more products or services includes the one or more attributes.

103. The computer program product as recited in claim **96**, wherein the third information relates to the one or more attributes.

104. The computer program product as recited in claim **96**, wherein the third information relates to a value of the one or more attributes.

105. The computer program product as recited in claim **96**, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the third information measures the retrospective value creation for customers of the supplying business.

106. The computer program product as recited in claim **96**, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the third information is utilized in association with a collaborative decision platform.

107. The computer program product as recited in claim **97**, further comprising computer code for allowing the receiving entity to provide insight in association with the source.

108. The computer program product as recited in claim **97**, further comprising computer code for allowing the receiving entity to provide insight in association with the source, in order to reduce risk associated with the decision-making.

109. The computer program product as recited in claim **97**, further comprising computer code for allowing the receiving entity to effect a modification in association with the third information of the source.

110. The computer program product as recited in claim **97**, further comprising computer code for allowing the receiving entity to provide a confirmation in association with the source.

111. The computer program product as recited in claim **97**, further comprising computer code for allowing the user to provide insight in association with the source.

112. The computer program product as recited in claim **97**, further comprising computer code for allowing the user to provide insight in association with the source, in order to reduce risk associated with the decision-making.

113. The computer program product as recited in claim **97**, further comprising computer code for allowing the user to modify the third information of the source.

114. The computer program product as recited in claim **97**, further comprising computer code for allowing the user to provide a confirmation in association with the source.

115. The computer program product as recited in claim **97**, further comprising computer code for providing source information that specifies the source.

116. The computer program product as recited in claim **115**, wherein the source information includes a directory.

117. The computer program product as recited in claim **115**, wherein the source information includes at least one person's name.

118. The computer program product as recited in claim **115**, wherein the source information specifies a plurality of sources of the third information.

119. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the at least one application is the corporate-related application.

120. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the at least one application is the product supply-related application.

121. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the at least one application is the service supply-related application.

122. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the at least one application is the financial-related application.

123. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the at least one application is the real estate-related application.

124. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the computer program product is operable such that real-time collaborative decision-making is provided between the receiving entity and the supplying business.

125. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the computer program product is operable such that alternatives of the supplying business are provided in terms of an associated effect on the first information.

126. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, and further comprising computer code for assessing uncertainties for analysis purposes.

127. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the at least one application is the product supply-related application and the product supply-related application relates to marketing at least one product.

128. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the at least one application is the service supply-related application and the service supply-related application relates to marketing at least one service.

129. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the at least one application is the corporate-related application and the corporate-related application relates to marketing.

130. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the process is related to a business-to-business transaction.

131. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the computer code for receiving the first information, receiving the second information, and causing execution of the process are executed using the system.

132. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the second information includes information relating to controllables.

133. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the second information includes information relating to uncertainties.

134. The computer program product as recited in claim **133**, wherein the uncertainties include independent uncertainties.

135. The computer program product as recited in claim 133, wherein the uncertainties include uncertainties dependent on decisions.

136. The computer program product as recited in claim 133, wherein the uncertainties include at least one of a product sales volume change, a margin change, a cost change, or a margin change.

137. The computer program product as recited in claim 133, wherein the uncertainties include at least two of a product sales volume change, a margin change, a cost change, and a margin change.

138. The computer program product as recited in claim 133, wherein the uncertainties include at least three of a product sales volume change, a margin change, a cost change, and a margin change.

139. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the second information includes information relating to information sources.

140. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the second information includes information relating to decision alternatives.

141. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the second information includes information relating to sources of value.

142. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product utilizes a structural relationship of decisions.

143. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product utilizes input from a spreadsheet.

144. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product utilizes at least one equation relating to at least one decision.

145. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product utilizes a plurality of equations relating to a plurality of decisions.

146. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product utilizes structural relationship of decisions, values, and uncertainties.

147. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product is capable of supporting an asynchronous decision-making process.

148. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product utilizes policies that form boundary conditions for a decision.

149. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product utilizes values that are important to a decision and uncertainties that potentially impact the values.

150. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the storage includes a database.

151. The computer program product as recited in claim 150, wherein the database includes at least one decision-relevant database.

152. The computer program product as recited in claim 150, wherein the database is one of a plurality of databases that are included.

153. The computer program product as recited in claim 152, wherein the plurality of databases are coupled via at least one network.

154. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the system includes a decision platform.

155. The computer program product as recited in claim 154, wherein the decision platform includes a platform that supports decision-making.

156. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the system includes the application.

157. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the products or services include products.

158. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the process includes an asynchronous remote decision-making process.

159. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the one or more attributes includes a plurality of the attributes, and the computer program product further comprising:

computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the receiving entity to enter a boundary condition associated with the decision-making, wherein the boundary condition is capable of being modified and involves price;

computer code for providing at least one additional first interface that allows the user to provide input indicative of aspects associated with the decision-making, wherein the aspects are capable of being modified;

computer code for providing at least one second interface that displays a plurality of alternatives that include alternate choices, based, at least in part, on the boundary condition and the aspects;

computer code for providing at least one additional second interface that displays the plurality of alternatives, as modified by user input;

computer code for providing at least one third interface that displays relative value associated with each of the alternatives, and allows the user to make modifications; and

computer code for receiving third information that includes public information, wherein the third information is received from a source separate from the receiving entity and the supplying business, and relates to a value of at least one aspect of the one or more products or services, for identifying a retrospective value creation for a plurality of customers, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the process that is related to decision-making is capable of being executed based on the first information, the second information, and the third information, such that the at least one third interface includes content that is a function of the first information, the second information, and the third information.

160. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the one or more attributes includes a plurality of the attributes, and the computer program product further comprising:

computer code for providing at least one first interface that is adapted to receive input indicative of at least one price associated with the decision-making, wherein the at least one price is capable of being modified;

computer code for providing at least one additional first interface that allows the user to input aspects associated with the decision-making, wherein the aspects are capable of being modified; and

computer code for providing at least one second interface that displays a plurality of alternatives that include alternate choices, based, at least in part, on the at least one price and the aspects.

161. The computer program product as recited in claim 160, further comprising computer code for providing at least one third interface that displays value associated with each of the alternatives, and allows the user to make modifications.

162. The computer program product as recited in claim 160, further comprising computer code for receiving third information that includes public information, wherein the third information is received from a source separate from the

receiving entity and the supplying business, and relates to a value of at least one aspect of the one or more products or services.

163. The computer program product as recited in claim **162**, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the process that is related to decision-making is capable of being executed based on the first information, the second information, and the third information.

164. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, further comprising computer code for providing an ability to allow different people input data into a set of displays at different times, and from different places, in order to support the decision-making.

165. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, wherein the at least one first interface, the at least one additional first interface, and the at least one second interface, include web pages.

166. The computer program product as recited in claim **165**, wherein at least one of the web pages includes a dynamic web page.

167. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, wherein the at least one first interface, the at least one additional first interface, and the at least one second interface, each is an interface object.

168. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, wherein the at least one first interface, the at least one additional first interface, and the at least one second interface, each is an interface element.

169. The computer program product as recited in claim **165**, wherein at least one of the web pages includes a video.

170. The computer program product as recited in claim **162**, wherein the third information is received from the receiving entity.

171. The computer program product as recited in claim **162**, wherein the third information relates to at least one aspect of the one or more products or services.

172. The computer program product as recited in claim **171**, wherein the at least one aspect of the one or more products or services includes the one or more attributes.

173. The computer program product as recited in claim **162**, wherein the third information relates to the one or more attributes.

174. The computer program product as recited in claim **162**, wherein the third information relates to a value of the one or more attributes.

175. The computer program product as recited in claim **162**, wherein the third information measures the retrospective value creation for customers of the supplying business.

176. The computer program product as recited in claim **162**, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the third information is utilized in association with a collaborative decision platform.

177. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the alternatives are displayed in a table.

178. The computer program product as recited in claim **177**, wherein at least one aspect of input from the user via the least one first interface drives a column heading in the table with the alternatives for the column heading arranged therebeneath.

179. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, further comprising computer code for modifying the alternatives.

180. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, further comprising computer code for selecting the alternatives.

181. The computer program product as recited in claim **180**, wherein the alternatives includes choices.

182. The computer program product as recited in claim **161**, wherein the at least one third interface is element of an analysis interface.

183. The computer program product as recited in claim **161**, wherein the at least one third interface allows the user to modify a range of data.

184. The computer program product as recited in claim **161**, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional third interface that provides a decision sensitivity display.

185. The computer program product as recited in claim **161**, further comprising computer code for providing at least one fourth interface that provides a potential feasible hybrid theme.

186. The computer program product as recited in claim **161**, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional third interface the content of which is a function of input provided using the at least one third interface.

187. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, wherein the at least one first interface allows the user to form a plurality of boundary conditions.

188. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, wherein the at least one first interface and the at least one additional first interface are elements of a framing interface.

189. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, wherein the alternatives are displayed in a table.

190. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, wherein the computer program product is operable such that animated icons are provided via the user interface.

191. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, further comprising computer for negotiating a delivery agreement.

192. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the one or more attributes includes an administrative cost.

193. The computer program product as recited in claim **6**, wherein the computer program product is operable such that dynamic web pages are provided via the user interface.

194. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, further comprising computer code for hierarchical expansion of the plurality of the attributes.

195. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, wherein the input is received by allowing the user to input the at least one price.

196. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, wherein the at least one price includes a range of prices.

197. The computer program product as recited in claim **160**, wherein the logic is associated with a plurality of modules.

198. The computer program product as recited in claim **197**, wherein the plurality of modules include universal modules.

199. The computer program product as recited in claim **197**, wherein the plurality of modules include at least one of a framing module, an alternatives module, an analysis module, and a connection module.

200. The computer program product as recited in claim **197**, wherein the plurality of modules include a framing module.

201. The computer program product as recited in claim **197**, wherein the plurality of modules include an alternatives module.

202. The computer program product as recited in claim **197**, wherein the plurality of modules include an analysis module.

203. The computer program product as recited in claim 197, wherein the plurality of modules include a framing module, an alternatives module, an analysis module, and a connection module.

204. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the one or more attributes includes a plurality of the attributes, and the computer program product further comprising:

computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the receiving entity to enter a boundary condition associated with the decision-making, wherein the boundary condition is capable of being modified and involves price;

computer code for providing at least one additional first interface that allows the user to provide input indicative of aspects associated with the decision-making, wherein the aspects are capable of being modified;

computer code for providing at least one second interface that displays a plurality of alternatives that include alternate choices, based, at least in part, on the boundary condition and the aspects;

computer code for providing at least one additional second interface that displays the plurality of alternatives, as modified by user input;

computer code for providing at least one third interface that displays relative value associated with each of the alternatives, and allows the user to make modifications; and

computer code for receiving third information that includes public information, wherein the third information is received from a source separate from the receiving entity and the supplying business, and relates to a value of at least one aspect of the one or more products or services, for identifying a retrospective value creation for a plurality of customers, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the process that is related to decision-making is capable of being executed based on the first information, the second information, and the third information, such that the at least one third interface includes content that is a function of the first information, the second information, and the third information;

wherein the computer program product is operable to provide an ability to allow different people input data into a set of displays at different times, and from different places, in order to support the decision-making;

wherein the at least one first interface, the at least one additional first interface, the at least one second interface, the at least one additional second interface, and the at least one third interface, each includes at least one web page; and

wherein the at least one additional first interface includes content which is a function of input provided using the at least one first interface; and the at least one additional second interface includes content which is a function of input provided using the at least one second interface.

205. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the one or more attributes includes a plurality of the attributes, and the computer program product further comprising:

computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the receiving entity to indicate at least one price associated with the decision-making, wherein the at least one price is capable of being modified;

computer code for providing at least one additional first interface that allows the user to input aspects associated with the decision-making, wherein the aspects are capable of being modified;

computer code for providing at least one second interface that displays a plurality of alternatives that include alternate choices, based, at least in part, on the at least one price and the aspects;

computer code for providing at least one additional second interface that displays the plurality of alternatives, as modified by user input;

computer code for providing at least one third interface that displays value associated with each of the alternatives, and allows the user to make modifications; and

computer code for receiving third information that includes public information, wherein the third information is received from a source separate from the receiving entity and the supplying business, and relates to a value of at least one aspect of the one or more products or services and measures a retrospective value creation for a plurality of customers, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the process that is related to decision-making is capable of being executed based on the first information, the second information, and the third information;

wherein the computer program product is operable to provide an ability to allow different people input data into at least one display at different times, and from different places, in order to support the decision-making; and

wherein the at least one first interface, the at least one additional first interface, the at least one second interface, and the at least one additional second interface each includes web pages.

206. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the third information is received from the receiving entity.

207. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, wherein the at least one aspect of the one or more products or services includes the one or more attributes.

208. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, wherein the third information relates to the one or more attributes.

209. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, wherein the third information relates to a value of the one or more attributes.

210. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one third interface includes content that is a function of the first information, the second information, and the third information.

211. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the third information is utilized in association with a collaborative decision platform.

212. The computer program product as recited in claim 211, wherein the collaborative decision platform includes a plurality of modules including a framing module, an alternatives module, an analysis module, and a connection module.

213. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the alternatives are displayed in a table.

214. The computer program product as recited in claim 213, wherein the computer program product is operable such that at least one aspect of input from the user via the least one first interface drives a column heading in the table with the alternatives for the column heading arranged therebeneath.

215. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, further comprising computer code for modifying the alternatives.

216. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, further comprising computer code for selecting the alternatives.

217. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, wherein the at least one third interface is an element of an analysis interface.

218. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one third interface allows the user to modify a range of data.

219. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional third interface that provides a decision sensitivity display.

220. The computer program product as recited in claim 219, wherein the decision sensitivity display includes a decision sensitivity table.

221. The computer program product as recited in claim 219, wherein the decision sensitivity display includes a decision sensitivity chart.

222. The computer program product as recited in claim 219, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the decision sensitivity display shows at least one value associated with a first choice and at least one value associated with a second choice.

223. The computer program product as recited in claim 219, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the decision sensitivity display compares at least one value associated with a choice.

224. The computer program product as recited in claim 219, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the decision sensitivity display identifies sources of value.

225. The computer program product as recited in claim 219, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the decision sensitivity display identifies sources of value for each of a plurality of choices.

226. The computer program product as recited in claim 219, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the decision sensitivity display identifies at least one aspect associated with at least one choice.

227. The computer program product as recited in claim 226, wherein the at least one aspect is associated with value.

228. The computer program product as recited in claim 226, wherein the at least one choice is pre-defined.

229. The computer program product as recited in claim 226, wherein the at least one choice is user-defined.

230. The computer program product as recited in claim 226, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one choice is capable of being provided a choice name.

231. The computer program product as recited in claim 226, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one choice is capable of being defined by a plurality of selections.

232. The computer program product as recited in claim 226, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one choice is capable of being defined by an amount of a purchase.

233. The computer program product as recited in claim 226, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one choice is capable of being defined by a selection of a plurality of alternatives.

234. The computer program product as recited in claim 233, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one choice is capable of being modified.

235. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, and further comprising computer code for providing at least one fourth interface that provides a potential feasible hybrid theme.

236. The computer program product as recited in claim 235, wherein the potential feasible hybrid theme includes a hybrid strategy.

237. The computer program product as recited in claim 236, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the hybrid strategy combines a plurality of alternative choices.

238. The computer program product as recited in claim 237, wherein at least one of the plurality alternative choices is pre-defined.

239. The computer program product as recited in claim 235, wherein the potential feasible hybrid theme is associated with at least one choice.

240. The computer program product as recited in claim 239, wherein the at least one choice is pre-defined.

241. The computer program product as recited in claim 239, wherein the at least one choice is user-defined.

242. The computer program product as recited in claim 241, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one choice is capable of being provided a name.

243. The computer program product as recited in claim 241, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one choice is capable of being defined by a selection of a plurality of alternatives.

244. The computer program product as recited in claim 241, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one choice is capable of being modified.

245. A computer program product embodied on a tangible computer readable medium, comprising:

computer code for facilitating decision-making, the computer code for facilitating associated with an application which is a real estate-related application, a medical-related application, a corporate-related application, a product supply-related application, a service supply-related application, or a financial-related application;

computer code for retrieving first information from a memory;

computer code for receiving second information from a user interface; and

computer code for causing generation of at least one display based on the first information and the second information, the display facilitating the decision-making by including a decision sensitivity display embedded in a web page constructed utilizing a hypertext markup language;

wherein the application is capable of being executed using a system capable of: (i) retrieving stored information; (ii) receiving user information; and (iii) processing the stored information and the user information for generating output of the processing; where one or more of (i)-(iii) is carried out utilizing, at least in part, one or more modules that is capable of being used to apply the one or more of (i)-(iii) differently.

246. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional third interface content of which is a function of input provided using the at least one third interface.

247. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one first interface allows the user to form a plurality of boundary conditions.

248. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, wherein the at least one first interface and the at least one additional first interface are elements of a framing interface.

249. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the alternatives are displayed in a table.

250. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, further comprising computer code for negotiating a delivery agreement.

251. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, wherein the computer program product is operable such that dynamic web pages are provided via the user interface.

252. The computer program product as recited in claim 205, further comprising computer code for hierarchical expansion of the plurality of the attributes.

253. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the system includes software.

254. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the system includes hardware.

255. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the receiving entity includes a business entity.

256. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the process that is related to decision-making includes a process that supports decision-making.

257. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the second information regarding one or more products or services is received in association with a single supplying business.

258. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the second information regarding one or more products or services is received from a plurality of supplying businesses.

259. The computer program product as recited in claim 258, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the first information and the second information are received at and processed by an intermediate entity that is separate from the supplying businesses and the receiving entity.

260. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product is operable such that real-time decision-making is supported.

261. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product is capable of delivering presentation information to the user in accordance with the logic utilizing the user interface.

262. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the process relates to customer relationship management.

263. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, and further comprising computer code for negotiating a purchase agreement.

264. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, and further comprising computer code for negotiating a delivery agreement.

265. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the first information is received from the receiving entity.

266. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein at least a portion of the computer program product includes a plurality of objects associated with an object-oriented programming language.

267. The computer program product as recited in claim 266, wherein the objects include at least one object that is capable of being used to initialize the process.

268. The computer program product as recited in claim 266, wherein the at least one of the plurality of objects is capable of providing a framing functionality.

269. The computer program product as recited in claim 266, wherein the objects include at least one object that is capable of being used to develop decision related alternatives in the process.

270. The computer program product as recited in claim 266, wherein the at least one of the plurality of objects is capable of providing an alternatives functionality.

271. The computer program product as recited in claim 266, wherein the objects include at least one object that is capable of being used to analyze alternatives in the process.

272. The computer program product as recited in claim 266, wherein the at least one of the plurality of objects is capable of providing an analysis functionality.

273. The computer program product as recited in claim 266, wherein the objects include at least one object that is capable of being used to process decision-related alternatives to develop a solution.

274. The computer program product as recited in claim 266, wherein the at least one of the plurality of objects is capable of providing a connection functionality.

275. The computer program product as recited in claim 266, wherein the objects include:

a first object that is capable of being used to initialize the process,

a second object that is capable of being used to develop decision-related alternatives in the process,

a third object that is capable of being used to analyze the decision-related alternatives in the process, and

a fourth object that is capable of being used to process the decision-related alternatives to develop a solution.

276. The computer program product as recited in claim 266, wherein the objects communicate utilizing encapsulation that enforces data abstraction.

277. The computer program product as recited in claim 266, wherein the objects are implemented utilizing class libraries.

278. The computer program product as recited in claim 277, wherein the class libraries are capable of being utilized for generating the user interface.

279. The computer program product as recited in claim 266, wherein the objects are implemented utilizing subclassing and inheritance to extend or modify objects by deriving additional objects from classes.

280. A computer program product embodied on a tangible computer readable medium, comprising:

collaborative decision computer code for decision-making, the collaborative decision computer code for decision-making including an application which is a real estate-related application, a medical-related application, a corporate-related application, a product supply-related application, a service supply-related application, or a financial-related application;

computer code for retrieving first information from a memory;

computer code for receiving second information from a user interface;

computer code for generating at least one display based on a computation involving the first information and the second information, the display facilitating the decision-making by being capable of viewing utilizing a web browser and including at least one of a tornado diagram, a decision sensitivity display or a decision hierarchy display; and

wherein the computer program product includes computer code having a plurality of objects associated with an object-oriented programming language.

281. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the decision-making involves a policy, and the decision sensitivity display shows an impact of at least one of a plurality of variables on results of the policy.

282. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the objects include at least one object that is capable of being used to initialize the computation.

283. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the at least one of the plurality of objects is capable of providing a framing functionality.

284. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the objects include at least one object that is capable of being used to develop decision related alternatives.

285. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the at least one of the plurality of objects is capable of providing an alternatives functionality.

286. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the objects include at least one object that is capable of being used to analyze alternatives.

287. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the at least one of the plurality of objects is capable of providing an analysis functionality.

288. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the objects include:

a first object that is capable of being used to develop decision-related alternatives,

a second object that is capable of being used to analyze the decision-related alternatives, and

a third object that is capable of being used to process the decision-related alternatives to develop a solution.

289. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the objects communicate utilizing encapsulation that enforces data abstraction.

290. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the objects are implemented utilizing class libraries.

291. The computer program product as recited in claim **290**, wherein the class libraries are capable of being utilized for generating the display.

292. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the objects are implemented utilizing subclassing and inheritance to extend or modify objects by deriving additional objects from classes.

293. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the at least one display is implemented utilizing at least one dynamic web page.

294. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the decision-making is performed in real-time.

295. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the decision-making includes real-time decision-making.

296. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the application is capable of being executed using a collaborative decision-making platform capable of: (i) retrieving stored information; (ii) receiving user information; and (iii) processing the stored information and the user information for generating output of the processing; where one or more of (i)-(iii) is carried out utilizing, at least in part, one or more modules capable of applying the one or more of (i)-(iii) differently.

297. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the decision-making is facilitated utilizing a platform capable of supporting collaborative decision-making, and the display facilitates the collaborative decision-making by including the decision sensitivity display.

298. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the platform is web-enabled.

299. The computer program product as recited in claim **298**, wherein the network is model-driven.

300. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the computer program product is industry-independent.

301. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the decision-making relates to which products or services are suitable for an entity.

302. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the decision-making relates to customer relationship management.

303. The computer program product as recited in claim **302**, wherein the customer includes a business.

304. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, further comprising computer code for identifying a strategy.

305. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, further comprising computer code for assessing uncertainties for analysis purposes.

306. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the decision-making is facilitated utilizing platform means for supporting the decision-making in a collaborative manner.

307. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the decision-making is facilitated utilizing means for collaborative decision-making.

308. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the decision-making is facilitated utilizing a platform including module means for supporting collaborative decision-making.

309. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the decision-making is facilitated utilizing a collaborative platform including at least one module for supporting the decision-making in a manner that is, at least in part, universal when applied for different purposes.

310. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the decision-making includes collaborative decision-making that is facilitated utilizing a platform including at least one module for supporting the decision-making in a manner that is, at least in part, universal when applied differently by the platform.

311. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the decision sensitivity display shows at least one value associated with a first strategy and at least one value associated with a second strategy.

312. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the decision sensitivity display compares at least one value associated with a strategy.

313. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the decision sensitivity display identifies sources of value.

314. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the decision sensitivity display identifies sources of value for each of a plurality of strategies.

315. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the decision sensitivity display identifies at least one aspect associated with at least one strategy.

316. The computer program product as recited in claim **315**, wherein the at least one aspect is associated with value.

317. The computer program product as recited in claim **315**, wherein the at least one strategy is pre-defined.

318. The computer program product as recited in claim **315**, wherein the at least one strategy is user-defined.

319. The computer program product as recited in claim 318, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being provided a strategy name.

320. The computer program product as recited in claim 318, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a plurality of selections.

321. The computer program product as recited in claim 318, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by an amount of stock purchase.

322. The computer program product as recited in claim 318, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a selection of a plurality of alternatives.

323. The computer program product as recited in claim 318, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

324. The computer program product as recited in claim 323, wherein a range associated with the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

325. The computer program product as recited in claim 315, wherein the at least one strategy is a stock purchase strategy.

326. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the decision sensitivity display identifies at least one aspect associated with a plurality of strategies.

327. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the application is the financial-related application.

328. The computer program product as recited in claim 327, further comprising code for displaying a stock ticker.

329. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the decision sensitivity display shows at least one profit-related value associated with a first strategy and at least one profit-related value associated with a second strategy.

330. The computer program product as recited in claim 280, wherein the decision-making is facilitated utilizing a platform capable of supporting collaborative decision-making, and the display facilitates the collaborative decision-making by including the decision hierarchy display.

331. The computer program product as recited in claim 330, wherein the decision hierarchy display identifies decisions that are within a scope of a decision making process.

332. The computer program product as recited in claim 330, wherein the decision hierarchy display identifies at least one decision associated with at least one strategy.

333. The computer program product as recited in claim 332, wherein the at least one strategy is pre-defined.

334. The computer program product as recited in claim 332, wherein the at least one strategy is user-defined.

335. The computer program product as recited in claim 334, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being provided a strategy name.

336. The computer program product as recited in claim 334, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a plurality of selections.

337. The computer program product as recited in claim 334, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by an amount of stock purchase.

338. The computer program product as recited in claim 334, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a selection of a plurality of alternatives.

339. The computer program product as recited in claim 334, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

340. The computer program product as recited in claim 339, wherein a range associated with the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

341. The computer program product as recited in claim 332, wherein the at least one strategy is a stock purchase strategy.

342. The computer program product as recited in claim 330, wherein the decision hierarchy display includes at least one of policies, decisions, or tactics.

343. The computer program product as recited in claim 330, wherein the decision hierarchy display includes at least two of: policies, decisions, and tactics.

344. The computer program product as recited in claim 330, wherein the decision hierarchy display includes: policies, decisions, and tactics.

345. The computer program product as recited in claim 280, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a potential hybrid theme.

346. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a potential feasible hybrid theme.

347. The computer program product as recited in claim 346, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a plurality of the potential feasible hybrid themes.

348. The computer program product as recited in claim 346, wherein the potential feasible hybrid theme includes a hybrid strategy.

349. The computer program product as recited in claim 348, wherein the hybrid strategy combines a plurality of alternative strategies.

350. The computer program product as recited in claim 349, wherein at least one of the plurality alternative strategies is pre-defined.

351. The computer program product as recited in claim 346, wherein the potential feasible hybrid theme is associated with at least one strategy.

352. The computer program product as recited in claim 351, wherein the at least one strategy is pre-defined.

353. The computer program product as recited in claim 351, wherein the at least one strategy is user-defined.

354. The computer program product as recited in claim 353, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being provided a strategy name.

355. The computer program product as recited in claim 353, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a plurality of selections.

356. The computer program product as recited in claim 353, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by an amount of stock purchase.

357. The computer program product as recited in claim 353, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a selection of a plurality of alternatives.

358. The computer program product as recited in claim 353, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

359. The computer program product as recited in claim 358, wherein a range associated with the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

360. The computer program product as recited in claim 351, wherein the at least one strategy is a stock purchase strategy.

361. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the decision sensitivity display is capable of showing at least one value associated with a first strategy and at least one value associated with a second strategy; the at least one first strategy including a pre-defined strategy and the at least one second strategy including a user-defined strategy;

the second strategy capable of being: provided a strategy name by a user, defined by a selection of a plurality of alternatives, and further modified.

362. The computer program product as recited in claim **361**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a decision display, the decision display identifying at least one decision associated with the second strategy.

363. The computer program product as recited in claim **362**, wherein the decision display includes the decision hierarchy display.

364. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the application is the real estate-related application.

365. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the application is the medical-related application.

366. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the application is the product supply-related application.

367. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the application is the service supply-related application.

368. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the application is the financial-related application.

369. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, further comprising computer code for allowing a user to modify the decision sensitivity display.

370. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the decision-making is related to a business-to-business transaction.

371. The computer program product as recited in claim **361**, wherein the decision sensitivity display is capable of showing the at least one value associated with the first strategy simultaneously with the at least one value associated with the second strategy.

372. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the application is the product supply-related application and the product supply-related application relates to marketing at least one product.

373. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the application is the service supply-related application and the service supply-related application relates to marketing at least one service.

374. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the application is the corporate-related application and the corporate-related application relates to marketing.

375. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the memory includes at least one database.

376. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the memory includes at least one decision-relevant database.

377. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the memory includes a plurality of databases.

378. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the memory includes a plurality of databases coupled via at least one network.

379. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the decision-making is facilitated utilizing a platform capable of supporting collaborative decision-making, and the display facilitates the collaborative decision-making by including the decision hierarchy display, and the decision hierarchy display includes a table.

380. The computer program product as recited in claim **379**, wherein each decision in the decision hierarchy display is represented by a column heading in the table.

381. The computer program product as recited in claim **380**, wherein alternatives for each decision are arranged beneath the column heading.

382. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the decision-making is facilitated utilizing a platform capable of supporting collaborative decision-making, and the display facilitates the collaborative decision-making by including the decision hierarchy display, and content of the decision hierarchy display is based on the second information.

383. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the second information includes information relating to controllables.

384. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the second information includes information relating to uncertainties.

385. The computer program product as recited in claim **305**, wherein the uncertainties include independent uncertainties.

386. The computer program product as recited in claim **305**, wherein the uncertainties include uncertainties dependent on decisions.

387. The computer program product as recited in claim **305**, wherein the uncertainties include at least one of a product sales volume change, a margin change, a cost change, or a margin change.

388. The computer program product as recited in claim **305**, wherein include at least two of a product sales volume change, a margin change, a cost change, and a margin change.

389. The computer program product as recited in claim **305**, wherein include at least three of a product sales volume change, a margin change, a cost change, and a margin change.

390. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision hierarchy display utilizing a collaborative decision platform, the decision hierarchy display including information on target customers.

391. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision hierarchy display utilizing a collaborative decision platform, the decision hierarchy display including information on at least one channel.

392. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision hierarchy display utilizing a collaborative decision platform, the decision hierarchy display including information on a salesforce channel.

393. The computer program product as recited in claim **280**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision hierarchy display utilizing a collaborative decision platform, the decision hierarchy display including information on a service channel.

394. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the second information includes information relating to information sources.

395. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the second information includes information relating to decision alternatives.

396. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the second information includes information relating to sources of value.

397. The computer program product as recited in claim **297**, wherein the computer program product utilizes a structural relationship of decisions.

398. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the computer program product utilizes input from a spreadsheet.

399. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the computer program product utilizes at least one equation relating to at least one decision.

400. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the computer program product utilizes a plurality of equations relating to a plurality of decisions.

401. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the computer program product utilizes structural relationship of decisions, values, and uncertainties.

402. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision hierarchy display utilizing a collaborative decision platform, the decision hierarchy display including a bar graph.

403. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the computer program product is capable of supporting an asynchronous decision-making process.

404. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the application utilizes policies that form boundary conditions for a decision.

405. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the application utilizes values that are important to a decision and uncertainties that potentially impact the values.

406. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the application interfaces the platform.

407. The computer program product as recited in claim 406, wherein the platform includes at least a portion of the computer code for the retrieving, the receiving, and the causing.

408. The computer program product as recited in claim 406, wherein the application is separate from the platform.

409. The computer program product as recited in claim 297, wherein the computer program product includes computer code having a plurality of universal modules associated with the object-oriented programming language.

410. The computer program product as recited in claim 305, wherein the computer program product is operable such that a range associated with the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

411. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the facilitation is performed in real-time utilizing the one or more modules.

412. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the decision-making includes real-time decision-making.

413. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the first information is retrieved via a network.

414. The computer program product as recited in claim 413, wherein the network is the Internet.

415. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the second information is received via a network.

416. The computer program product as recited in claim 415, wherein the network is the Internet.

417. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the computer program product is industry-independent.

418. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the decision-making relates to which products or services are suitable for an entity.

419. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the decision-making relates to customer relationship management.

420. The computer program product as recited in claim 419, wherein the customer includes a business.

421. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, further comprising computer code for identifying a strategy.

422. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, further comprising computer code for assessing uncertainties for analysis purposes.

423. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a potential feasible hybrid theme.

424. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a decision hierarchy display.

425. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision sensitivity display utilizing the one or more modules.

426. The computer program product as recited in claim 425, wherein the decision sensitivity display includes a decision sensitivity table.

427. The computer program product as recited in claim 425, wherein the decision sensitivity display includes a decision sensitivity chart.

428. The computer program product as recited in claim 425, wherein the decision sensitivity display shows at least one value associated with a first strategy and at least one value associated with a second strategy.

429. The computer program product as recited in claim 425, wherein the decision sensitivity display compares at least one value associated with a strategy.

430. The computer program product as recited in claim 425, wherein the decision sensitivity display identifies sources of value.

431. The computer program product as recited in claim 425, wherein the decision sensitivity display identifies sources of value for each of a plurality of strategies.

432. The computer program product as recited in claim 425, wherein the decision sensitivity display identifies at least one aspect associated with at least one strategy.

433. The computer program product as recited in claim 432, wherein the at least one aspect is associated with value.

434. The computer program product as recited in claim 432, wherein the at least one strategy is pre-defined.

435. The computer program product as recited in claim 432, wherein the at least one strategy is user-defined.

436. The computer program product as recited in claim 435, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being provided a strategy name.

437. The computer program product as recited in claim 435, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a plurality of selections.

438. The computer program product as recited in claim 435, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by an amount of stock purchase.

439. The computer program product as recited in claim 435, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a selection of a plurality of alternatives.

440. The computer program product as recited in claim 435, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

441. The computer program product as recited in claim 440, wherein a range associated with the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

442. The computer program product as recited in claim 432, wherein the at least one strategy is a stock purchase strategy.

443. The computer program product as recited in claim 425, wherein the decision sensitivity display identifies at least one aspect associated with a plurality of strategies.

444. The computer program product as recited in claim 425, wherein the application is the financial-related application.

445. The computer program product as recited in claim 444, further comprising code for displaying a stock ticker.

446. The computer program product as recited in claim 425, wherein the decision sensitivity display shows at least one profit-related value associated with a first strategy and at least one profit-related value associated with a second strategy.

447. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a decision hierarchy display utilizing the one or more modules.

448. The computer program product as recited in claim 447, wherein the decision hierarchy display identifies decisions that are within a scope of a decision making process.

449. The computer program product as recited in claim 447, wherein the decision hierarchy display identifies at least one decision associated with at least one strategy.

450. The computer program product as recited in claim 449, wherein the at least one strategy is pre-defined.

451. The computer program product as recited in claim 449, wherein the at least one strategy is user-defined.

452. The computer program product as recited in claim 451, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being provided a strategy name.

453. The computer program product as recited in claim 451, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a plurality of selections.

454. The computer program product as recited in claim 451, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by an amount of stock purchase.

455. The computer program product as recited in claim 451, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a selection of a plurality of alternatives.

456. The computer program product as recited in claim 451, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

457. The computer program product as recited in claim 456, wherein a range associated with the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

458. The computer program product as recited in claim 449, wherein the at least one strategy is a stock purchase strategy.

459. The computer program product as recited in claim 447, wherein the decision hierarchy display includes at least one of policies, decisions, or tactics.

460. The computer program product as recited in claim 447, wherein the decision hierarchy display includes at least two of: policies, decisions, and tactics.

461. The computer program product as recited in claim 447, wherein the decision hierarchy display includes: policies, decisions, and tactics.

462. The computer program product as recited in claim 425, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a potential hybrid theme.

463. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a potential feasible hybrid theme utilizing the one or more modules.

464. The computer program product as recited in claim 463, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a plurality of the potential feasible hybrid themes.

465. The computer program product as recited in claim 463, wherein the potential feasible hybrid theme includes a hybrid strategy.

466. The computer program product as recited in claim 465, wherein the hybrid strategy combines a plurality of alternative strategies.

467. The computer program product as recited in claim 466, wherein at least one of the plurality alternative strategies is pre-defined.

468. The computer program product as recited in claim 463, wherein the potential feasible hybrid theme is associated with at least one strategy.

469. The computer program product as recited in claim 468, wherein the at least one strategy is pre-defined.

470. The computer program product as recited in claim 468, wherein the at least one strategy is user-defined.

471. The computer program product as recited in claim 470, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being provided a strategy name.

472. The computer program product as recited in claim 470, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a plurality of selections.

473. The computer program product as recited in claim 470, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by an amount of stock purchase.

474. The computer program product as recited in claim 470, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a selection of a plurality of alternatives.

475. The computer program product as recited in claim 470, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

476. The computer program product as recited in claim 475, wherein a range associated with the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

477. The computer program product as recited in claim 468, wherein the at least one strategy is a stock purchase strategy.

478. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the decision sensitivity display is capable of showing at least one value associated with a first strategy and at least one value associated with a second strategy; the at least one first strategy including a pre-defined financial-related strategy and the at least one second strategy including a user-defined financial-related strategy; the second strategy capable of being: provided a strategy name by a user, defined by a selection of a plurality of alternatives, and further modified.

479. The computer program product as recited in claim 478, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a decision display including at least one of policies, decisions, or tactics, the decision display identifying the at least one of policies, decisions, or tactics associated with the second strategy.

480. The computer program product as recited in claim 478, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a decision display including at least two of policies, decisions, and tactics, the decision display identifying the at least two of policies, decisions, and tactics associated with the second strategy.

481. The computer program product as recited in claim 478, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a decision display including poli-

cies, decisions, and tactics, the decision display identifying the policies, decisions, and tactics associated with the second strategy.

482. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the application is the medical-related application.

483. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the application is the product supply-related application.

484. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the application is the service supply-related application.

485. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the application is the financial-related application.

486. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, further comprising computer code for allowing a user to modify the decision sensitivity display.

487. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the decision-making is related to a business-to-business transaction.

488. The computer program product as recited in claim **478**, wherein the decision sensitivity display is capable of showing the at least one value associated with the first strategy simultaneously with the at least one value associated with the second strategy.

489. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the application is the product supply-related application and the product supply-related application relates to marketing at least one product.

490. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the application is the service supply-related application and the service supply-related application relates to marketing at least one service.

491. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the application is the corporate-related application and the corporate-related application relates to marketing.

492. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the memory includes at least one database.

493. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the memory includes at least one decision-relevant database.

494. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the memory includes a plurality of databases.

495. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the memory includes a plurality of databases coupled via at least one network.

496. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a decision display including at least one of policies, decisions, or tactics; and the decision display includes a table.

497. The computer program product as recited in claim **496**, wherein the at least one of policies, decisions, or tactics in the decision display is represented by a column heading in the table.

498. The computer program product as recited in claim **497**, wherein alternatives for the at least one of policies, decisions, or tactics are arranged beneath the column heading.

499. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a decision display including at least one of policies, decisions, or tactics, and content of the decision display is based on the second information.

500. The computer program product as recited in claim **499**, wherein the second information includes information relating to controllables.

501. The computer program product as recited in claim **499**, wherein the second information includes information relating to uncertainties.

502. The computer program product as recited in claim **501**, wherein the uncertainties include independent uncertainties.

503. The computer program product as recited in claim **501**, wherein the uncertainties include uncertainties dependent on decisions.

504. The computer program product as recited in claim **501**, wherein the uncertainties include at least one of a product sales volume change, a margin change, a cost change, or a margin change.

505. The computer program product as recited in claim **501**, wherein include at least two of a product sales volume change, a margin change, a cost change, and a margin change.

506. The computer program product as recited in claim **501**, wherein include at least three of a product sales volume change, a margin change, a cost change, and a margin change.

507. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, further comprising computer code for generating a decision display including at least one of policies, decisions, or tactics, the decision display including information on target customers.

508. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, further comprising computer code for generating a decision display including at least one of policies, decisions, or tactics, the decision display including information on at least one channel.

509. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, further comprising computer code for generating a decision display including at least one of policies, decisions, or tactics, the decision display including information on a sales-force channel.

510. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, further comprising computer code for generating a decision display including at least one of policies, decisions, or tactics, the decision display including information on a service channel.

511. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the second information includes information relating to information sources.

512. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the second information includes information relating to decision alternatives.

513. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the second information includes information relating to sources of value.

514. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the computer program product utilizes a structural relationship of decisions.

515. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the computer program product utilizes input from a spreadsheet.

516. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the computer program product utilizes at least one equation relating to at least one decision.

517. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the computer program product utilizes a plurality of equations relating to a plurality of decisions.

518. The computer program product as recited in claim **245**, wherein the computer program product utilizes structural relationship of decisions, values, and uncertainties.

519. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, further comprising computer code for generating a decision display including at least one of policies, decisions, or tactics, in connection with the decision sensitivity display.

520. The computer program product as recited in claim 519, wherein the computer program product is capable of supporting an asynchronous decision-making process.

521. The computer program product as recited in claim 519, wherein the application utilizes policies that form boundary conditions for a decision.

522. The computer program product as recited in claim 519, wherein the application utilizes values that are important to a decision and uncertainties that potentially impact the values.

523. The computer program product as recited in claim 519, wherein the application interfaces a platform.

524. The computer program product as recited in claim 523, wherein the platform includes at least a portion of the computer code for the retrieving, the receiving, and the causing.

525. The computer program product as recited in claim 523, wherein the application is separate from the platform.

526. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the computer program product includes computer code having a plurality of objects associated with an object-oriented programming language, in connection with the one or modules.

527. The computer program product as recited in claim 526, wherein the facilitating the decision-making involves a policy, and the decision sensitivity display shows an impact of at least one of a plurality of variables on results of the policy.

528. The computer program product as recited in claim 526, wherein the objects include at least one object that is capable of being used to initialize a computation, in connection with the one or modules.

529. The computer program product as recited in claim 526, wherein the at least one of the plurality of objects is capable of providing a framing functionality, in connection with the one or modules.

530. The computer program product as recited in claim 526, wherein the objects include at least one object that is capable of being used to develop decision-related alternatives, in connection with the one or modules.

531. The computer program product as recited in claim 526, wherein the at least one of the plurality of objects is capable of providing an alternatives functionality, in connection with the one or modules.

532. The computer program product as recited in claim 526, wherein the objects include at least one object that is capable of being used to analyze alternatives, in connection with the one or modules.

533. The computer program product as recited in claim 526, wherein the at least one of the plurality of objects is capable of providing an analysis functionality, in connection with the one or modules.

534. The computer program product as recited in claim 526, wherein the objects include one or more of the following in connection with the one or modules:

a first object that is capable of being used to develop decision-related alternatives,

a second object that is capable of being used to analyze the decision-related alternatives, and

a third object that is capable of being used to process the decision-related alternatives to develop a solution.

535. The computer program product as recited in claim 526, wherein the objects communicate utilizing encapsulation that enforces data abstraction, in connection with the one or modules.

536. The computer program product as recited in claim 526, wherein the objects are implemented utilizing class libraries, in connection with the one or modules.

537. The computer program product as recited in claim 536, wherein the class libraries are capable of being utilized for generating the display, in connection with the one or modules.

538. The computer program product as recited in claim 526, wherein the objects are implemented utilizing subclassing and inheritance to extend or modify objects by deriving additional objects from classes, in connection with the one or modules.

539. The computer program product as recited in claim 526, wherein the at least one display is implemented utilizing at least one dynamic web page, in connection with the one or modules.

540. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the one or more of (i)-(iii) is carried out utilizing, at least in part, the one or more modules that is capable of being used to apply the one or more of (i)-(iii) to different business sectors.

541. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the one or more of (i)-(iii) is carried out utilizing, at least in part, the one or more modules that is capable of being used to apply the one or more of (i)-(iii) to different products.

542. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the one or more modules include a plurality of universal modules.

543. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the computer program product is operable such that all of (i)-(iii) are carried out utilizing, at least in part, the one or more modules that is capable of being used to apply all of (i)-(iii) differently.

544. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the one or more modules are re-usable.

545. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the one or more modules are accessible via a component integration architecture.

546. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the one or more modules include module means for applying similar functionality across multiple purposes.

547. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the display is accessible via a web browser.

548. The computer program product as recited in claim 245, wherein the one or more modules include a framing module, an alternatives module, an analysis module, and a connection module.

549. A computer program product embodied on a tangible computer readable medium, comprising:

computer code for facilitating decision-making, the computer code for facilitating associated with an application which is a real estate-related application, a medical-related application, a corporate-related application, a product supply-related application, a service supply-related application, or a financial-related application;

computer code for retrieving first information from a memory;

computer code for receiving second information from a user interface; and

computer code for causing generation of at least one display based on the first information and the second information, the display facilitating the decision-making by including at least one of a potential feasible hybrid theme, a decision sensitivity display, or a decision hierarchy display;

wherein the computer program product includes a collaborative decision platform capable of enabling real-time network-based collaboration between entities.

550. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the facilitation is performed in real-time.

551. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the decision-making includes real-time decision-making.

552. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the first information is retrieved via a network.

553. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the user interface receives different second information from different people at different times and from different places, such that contents of the at least one display is based on the second information from the different people.

554. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the second information is received via a network.

555. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the computer program product includes asynchronous computer code operable such that the user interface is capable of receiving the second information from different people at different times and from different places, such that contents of the at least one display is based on the second information from the different people; the asynchronous computer code further operable such that the user interface is capable of receiving modified second information from the different people, such that the contents of the at least one display is modified based on the modified second information from the different people.

556. The computer program product as recited in claim **555**, wherein the modified second information modifies a problem definition.

557. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the decision-making relates to which products or services are suitable for an entity.

558. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein at least a portion of the computer code is carried out using modules capable of interfacing with different applications adapted for applying the modules differently.

559. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein at least a portion of the computer code is carried out using universal modules capable of interfacing with different applications adapted for applying the universal modules differently.

560. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, further comprising computer code for identifying a strategy.

561. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, further comprising computer code for assessing uncertainties for analysis purposes.

562. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating at least two of: the potential feasible hybrid theme, the decision sensitivity display, and the decision hierarchy display.

563. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the potential feasible hybrid theme, the decision sensitivity display, and the decision hierarchy display.

564. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision sensitivity display.

565. The computer program product as recited in claim **564**, wherein the decision sensitivity display includes a decision sensitivity table.

566. The computer program product as recited in claim **564**, wherein the decision sensitivity display includes a decision sensitivity chart.

567. The computer program product as recited in claim **564**, wherein the decision sensitivity display shows at least one value associated with a first strategy and at least one value associated with a second strategy.

568. The computer program product as recited in claim **564**, wherein the decision sensitivity display compares at least one value associated with a strategy.

569. The computer program product as recited in claim **564**, wherein the decision sensitivity display identifies sources of value.

570. The computer program product as recited in claim **564**, wherein the decision sensitivity display identifies sources of value for each of a plurality of strategies.

571. The computer program product as recited in claim **564**, wherein the decision sensitivity display identifies at least one aspect associated with at least one strategy.

572. The computer program product as recited in claim **571**, wherein the at least one aspect is associated with value.

573. The computer program product as recited in claim **571**, wherein the at least one strategy is pre-defined.

574. The computer program product as recited in claim **571**, wherein the at least one strategy is user-defined.

575. The computer program product as recited in claim **574**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being provided a strategy name.

576. The computer program product as recited in claim **574**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a plurality of selections.

577. The computer program product as recited in claim **574**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by an amount of stock purchase.

578. The computer program product as recited in claim **574**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a selection of a plurality of alternatives.

579. The computer program product as recited in claim **574**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

580. The computer program product as recited in claim **579**, wherein a range associated with the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

581. The computer program product as recited in claim **571**, wherein the at least one strategy is a stock purchase strategy.

582. The computer program product as recited in claim **564**, wherein the decision sensitivity display identifies at least one aspect associated with a plurality of strategies.

583. The computer program product as recited in claim **564**, wherein the application is the financial-related application.

584. The computer program product as recited in claim **583**, further comprising code for displaying a stock ticker.

585. The computer program product as recited in claim **564**, wherein the decision sensitivity display shows at least

one profit-related value associated with a first strategy and at least one profit-related value associated with a second strategy.

586. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision hierarchy display.

587. The computer program product as recited in claim **586**, wherein the decision hierarchy display identifies decisions that are within a scope of a decision making process.

588. The computer program product as recited in claim **586**, wherein the decision hierarchy display identifies at least one decision associated with at least one strategy.

589. The computer program product as recited in claim **588**, wherein the at least one strategy is pre-defined.

590. The computer program product as recited in claim **588**, wherein the at least one strategy is user-defined.

591. The computer program product as recited in claim **590**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being provided a strategy name.

592. The computer program product as recited in claim **590**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a plurality of selections.

593. The computer program product as recited in claim **590**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by an amount of stock purchase.

594. The computer program product as recited in claim **590**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a selection of a plurality of alternatives.

595. The computer program product as recited in claim **590**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

596. The computer program product as recited in claim **595**, wherein a range associated with the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

597. The computer program product as recited in claim **588**, wherein the at least one strategy is a stock purchase strategy.

598. The computer program product as recited in claim **586**, wherein the decision hierarchy display includes at least one of policies, decisions, or tactics.

599. The computer program product as recited in claim **586**, wherein the decision hierarchy display includes at least two of: policies, decisions, and tactics.

600. The computer program product as recited in claim **586**, wherein the decision hierarchy display includes: policies, decisions, and tactics.

601. The computer program product as recited in claim **564**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the potential hybrid theme.

602. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the potential feasible hybrid theme.

603. The computer program product as recited in claim **602**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating a plurality of the potential feasible hybrid themes.

604. The computer program product as recited in claim **602**, wherein the potential feasible hybrid theme includes a hybrid strategy.

605. The computer program product as recited in claim **604**, wherein the hybrid strategy combines a plurality of alternative strategies.

606. The computer program product as recited in claim **605**, wherein at least one of the plurality alternative strategies is pre-defined.

607. The computer program product as recited in claim **602**, wherein the potential feasible hybrid theme is associated with at least one strategy.

608. The computer program product as recited in claim **607**, wherein the at least one strategy is pre-defined.

609. The computer program product as recited in claim **607**, wherein the at least one strategy is user-defined.

610. The computer program product as recited in claim **609**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being provided a strategy name.

611. The computer program product as recited in claim **609**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a plurality of selections.

612. The computer program product as recited in claim **609**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by an amount of stock purchase.

613. The computer program product as recited in claim **609**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being defined by a selection of a plurality of alternatives.

614. The computer program product as recited in claim **609**, wherein the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

615. The computer program product as recited in claim **614**, wherein a range associated with the at least one strategy is capable of being modified.

616. The computer program product as recited in claim **607**, wherein the at least one strategy is a stock purchase strategy.

617. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision sensitivity display; the decision sensitivity display capable of showing at least one value associated with a first strategy and at least one value associated with a second strategy; the at least one first strategy including a pre-defined stock-related strategy and the at least one second strategy including a user-defined stock-related strategy; the second strategy capable of being: provided a strategy name by a user, defined by a selection of a plurality of alternatives, and further modified.

618. The computer program product as recited in claim **617**, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision hierarchy display, the decision hierarchy display identifying at least one decision associated with the second strategy.

619. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the application is the corporate-related application.

620. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the application is the real estate-related application.

621. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the application is the medical-related application.

622. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the application is the product supply-related application.

623. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the application is the service supply-related application.

624. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, wherein the application is the financial-related application.

625. The computer program product as recited in claim **549**, further comprising computer code for allowing a user to modify at least one of a tornado diagram, the decision sensitivity display, the decision hierarchy display, an influence diagram, and the potential feasible hybrid theme.

626. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the decision-making is related to a business-to-business transaction.

627. The computer program product as recited in claim 617, wherein the decision sensitivity display is capable of showing the at least one value associated with the first strategy simultaneously with the at least one value associated with the second strategy.

628. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the application is the product supply-related application and the product supply-related application relates to marketing at least one product.

629. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the application is the service supply-related application and the service supply-related application relates to marketing at least one service.

630. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the application is the corporate-related application and the corporate-related application relates to marketing.

631. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the memory includes at least one database.

632. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the memory includes at least one decision-relevant database.

633. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the memory includes a plurality of databases.

634. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the memory includes a plurality of databases coupled via at least one network.

635. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision hierarchy display, and the decision hierarchy display includes a table.

636. The computer program product as recited in claim 635, wherein each decision in the decision hierarchy display is represented by a column heading in the table.

637. The computer program product as recited in claim 636, wherein alternatives for each decision are arranged beneath the column heading.

638. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision hierarchy display, and content of the decision hierarchy display is based on the second information.

639. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the second information includes information relating to controllables.

640. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the second information includes information relating to uncertainties.

641. The computer program product as recited in claim 561, wherein the uncertainties include independent uncertainties.

642. The computer program product as recited in claim 561, wherein the uncertainties include uncertainties dependent on decisions.

643. The computer program product as recited in claim 561, wherein the uncertainties include at least one of a product sales volume change, a margin change, a cost change, or a margin change.

644. The computer program product as recited in claim 561, wherein include at least two of a product sales volume change, a margin change, a cost change, and a margin change.

645. The computer program product as recited in claim 561, wherein include at least three of a product sales volume change, a margin change, a cost change, and a margin change.

646. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision hierarchy display, the decision hierarchy display including information on target customers.

647. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision hierarchy display, the decision hierarchy display including information on at least one channel.

648. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision hierarchy display, the decision hierarchy display including information on a sales-force channel.

649. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the computer code for generating includes computer code for generating the decision hierarchy display, the decision hierarchy display including information on a service channel.

650. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the second information includes information relating to information sources.

651. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the second information includes information relating to decision alternatives.

652. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the second information includes information relating to sources of value.

653. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the computer program product utilizes a structural relationship of decisions.

654. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the computer program product utilizes input from a spreadsheet.

655. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the computer program product utilizes at least one equation relating to at least one decision.

656. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the computer program product utilizes a plurality of equations relating to a plurality of decisions.

657. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the computer program product utilizes structural relationship of decisions, values, and uncertainties.

658. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the collaborative decision platform includes the computer code for facilitating, the computer code for retrieving, the computer code for receiving, and the computer code for causing.

659. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the computer program product is capable of supporting an asynchronous decision-making process.

660. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the application utilizes policies that form boundary conditions for a decision.

661. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the application utilizes values that are important to a decision and uncertainties that potentially impact the values.

662. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the application interfaces a platform.

663. The computer program product as recited in claim 662, wherein the platform includes at least a portion of the computer code for the retrieving, the receiving, and the causing.

664. The computer program product as recited in claim 662, wherein the application is separate from the platform.

665. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the computer program product includes computer code having a plurality of objects associated with an object-oriented programming language.

666. The computer program product as recited in claim 665, wherein the facilitating the decision-making involves a policy, and the decision sensitivity display shows an impact of at least one of a plurality of variables on results of the policy.

667. The computer program product as recited in claim 665, wherein the objects include at least one object that is capable of being used to initialize a computation.

668. The computer program product as recited in claim 665, wherein the at least one of the plurality of objects is capable of providing a framing functionality.

669. The computer program product as recited in claim 665, wherein the objects include at least one object that is capable of being used to develop decision-related alternatives.

670. The computer program product as recited in claim 665, wherein the at least one of the plurality of objects is capable of providing an alternatives functionality.

671. The computer program product as recited in claim 665, wherein the objects include at least one object that is capable of being used to analyze alternatives.

672. The computer program product as recited in claim 665, wherein the at least one of the plurality of objects is capable of providing an analysis functionality.

673. The computer program product as recited in claim 665, wherein the objects include:

a first object that is capable of being used to develop decision-related alternatives,

a second object that is capable of being used to analyze the decision-related alternatives, and

a third object that is capable of being used to process the decision-related alternatives to develop a solution.

674. The computer program product as recited in claim 665, wherein the objects communicate utilizing encapsulation that enforces data abstraction.

675. The computer program product as recited in claim 665, wherein the objects are implemented utilizing class libraries.

676. The computer program product as recited in claim 675, wherein the class libraries are capable of being utilized for generating the display.

677. The computer program product as recited in claim 665, wherein the objects are implemented utilizing subclassing and inheritance to extend or modify objects by deriving additional objects from classes.

678. The computer program product as recited in claim 665, wherein the at least one display is implemented utilizing at least one dynamic web page.

679. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, further comprising computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the user to form at least one boundary condition associated with the decision-making.

680. The computer program product as recited in claim 679, wherein the at least one first interface that allows the user to form at least one boundary condition associated with the decision-making allows the user to form a plurality of boundary conditions.

681. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, further comprising computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the user to input at least one tactic associated with the decision-making.

682. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, further comprising computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the user to input at least one policy associated with the decision-making.

683. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the at least one first interface allows the user to enter at least one decision relating to the decision-making.

684. The computer program product as recited in claim 682, wherein the at least one first interface allows the user to enter a plurality of decisions relating to the decision-making.

685. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the at least one first interface allows the user to enter at least one tactic relating to the decision-making.

686. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, further comprising computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the user to form at least one boundary condition associated with the decision-making utilizing a menu.

687. The computer program product as recited in claim 686, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional first interface that allows the user to form at least one additional boundary condition associated with the decision-making.

688. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, further comprising computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the user to input important values associated with the decision-making.

689. The computer program product as recited in claim 688, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional first interface that allows the user to input additional important values associated with the decision-making.

690. The computer program product as recited in claim 688, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one first interface and the at least one additional first interface work in parallel in connection with at least one common display.

691. The computer program product as recited in claim 688, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the important values and the additional important values are capable of being modified.

692. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, further comprising computer code for providing at least one first interface that allows the user to form at least one boundary condition associated with the decision-making, and allows the user to provide input associated with important aspects associated with the decision-making.

693. The computer program product as recited in claim 692, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the at least one boundary condition and the important aspects are capable of being modified.

694. The computer program product as recited in claim 692, wherein the at least one first interface is an element of a framing interface.

695. The computer program product as recited in claim 692, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional first interface a content of which is a function of input provided using the at least one first interface.

696. The computer program product as recited in claim 692, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional first interface that allows the user to form at least one additional boundary condition associated with the decision-making, and allows the user to provide input associated with additional important aspects associated with the decision-making.

697. The computer program product as recited in claim 692, further comprising computer code for providing at least one second interface that displays a plurality of alternatives.

698. The computer program product as recited in claim 697, wherein the alternatives include alternate choices.

699. The computer program product as recited in claim 697, wherein the alternatives are displayed in a table.

700. The computer program product as recited in claim 699, wherein at least one aspect of input received from the user via the least one first interface drives a column heading in the table with the alternatives for the column heading arranged therebeneath.

701. The computer program product as recited in claim 697, further comprising computer code for confirming at least one of the alternatives.

702. The computer program product as recited in claim 697, further comprising computer code for modifying the alternatives.

703. The computer program product as recited in claim 697, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional second interface that displays the plurality of alternatives, as modified by user input.

704. The computer program product as recited in claim 697, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional second interface a content of which is a function of input provided using the at least one second interface.

705. The computer program product as recited in claim 697, further comprising computer code for providing at least one third interface that displays sources of value in each of the alternatives.

706. The computer program product as recited in claim 697, further comprising computer code for providing at least one third interface that allows the user to modify input information.

707. The computer program product as recited in claim 705, wherein the at least one third interface is an element of an analysis interface.

708. The computer program product as recited in claim 706, wherein the at least one third interface allows the user to modify a range of data.

709. The computer program product as recited in claim 706, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional third interface that provides the decision sensitivity display.

710. The computer program product as recited in claim 706, further comprising computer code for providing at least one additional third interface a content of which is a function of input provided using the at least one third interface.

711. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, further comprising computer code for receiving third information that includes public information.

712. The computer program product as recited in claim 711, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the third information is received from a source separate from a receiving entity and a supplying business utilizing the collaborative decision platform.

713. The computer program product as recited in claim 711, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the third information is utilized as a function of user input.

714. The computer program product as recited in claim 712, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the third information is received from the receiving entity.

715. The computer program product as recited in claim 711, wherein the third information relates to one or more products or services.

716. The computer program product as recited in claim 715, wherein the third information relates to a value of at least one aspect of the one or more products or services.

717. The computer program product as recited in claim 716, wherein the at least one aspect of the one or more products or services includes the one or more attributes.

718. The computer program product as recited in claim 715, wherein the third information relates to one or more attributes associated with the one or more products or services.

719. The computer program product as recited in claim 715, wherein the third information relates to a value of one or more attributes associated with the one or more products or services.

720. The computer program product as recited in claim 711, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the third information measures a retrospective value creation for customers.

721. The computer program product as recited in claim 711, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the third information is utilized in association with the collaborative decision platform.

722. The computer program product as recited in claim 712, further comprising computer code for allowing the receiving entity to provide insight in association with the source.

723. The computer program product as recited in claim 712, further comprising computer code for allowing the receiving entity to provide insight in association with the source, in order to reduce risk associated with the decision-making.

724. The computer program product as recited in claim 712, further comprising computer code for allowing the receiving entity to effect a modification in association with the third information of the source.

725. The computer program product as recited in claim 712, further comprising computer code for allowing the receiving entity to provide a confirmation in association with the source.

726. The computer program product as recited in claim 712, further comprising computer code for allowing the user to provide insight in association with the source.

727. The computer program product as recited in claim 712, further comprising computer code for allowing the user to provide insight in association with the source, in order to reduce risk associated with the decision-making.

728. The computer program product as recited in claim 712, further comprising computer code for allowing the user to modify the third information of the source.

729. The computer program product as recited in claim 712, further comprising computer code for allowing the user to provide a confirmation in association with the source.

730. The computer program product as recited in claim 712, further comprising computer code for providing source information that specifies the source.

731. The computer program product as recited in claim 712, further comprising computer code for providing source information that identifies the source.

732. The computer program product as recited in claim 731, wherein the source information includes a directory.

733. The computer program product as recited in claim 731, wherein the source information includes at least one person's name.

734. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the collaborative decision platform allows input from at least three entities that impacts the at least one display.

735. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the collaborative decision platform involves collaboration of at least three entities.

736. The computer program product as recited in claim 549, wherein the collaborative decision platform involves collaboration of at least two entities via the Internet.

737. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic is part of one or more modules.

738. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the logic is carried out by one or more universal modules.

739. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the one or more of (i)-(iii) is carried out utilizing, at least in part, logic capable of accomplishing the one or more of (i)-(iii) for one or more purposes, by applying the one or more of (i)-(iii) to different products.

740. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the one or more of (i)-(iii) is carried out utilizing, at least in part, logic capable of accomplishing the one or more of (i)-(iii) for one or more purposes, by applying the one or more of (i)-(iii) to products associated with different businesses.

741. The computer program product as recited in claim 6, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the one or more of (i)-(iii) is carried out utilizing, at least in part, logic capable of accomplishing the one or more of (i)-(iii) for one or more purposes, by applying the one or more of (i)-(iii) to products associated with different business sectors.

742. A computer program product embodied on a tangible computer readable medium, comprising:

computer code for collaborative decision-making related to customer relationship management, the computer code for collaborative decision-making associated with an application which is a real estate-related application, a medical-related application, a corporate-related application, a product supply-related application, a service supply-related application, or a financial-related application;

computer code for retrieving first information from a memory;

computer code for receiving second information from at least one user interface; and

computer code for causing generation of at least one display based on the first information and the second information, the display facilitating the collaborative decision-making by including at least one of a potential feasible hybrid theme, a decision sensitivity display, or a decision hierarchy display.

743. The computer program product as recited in claim 742, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the collaborative decision-making is carried out utilizing a system that is capable of carrying out the collaborative decision-making in connection with different decisions, and the at least one user interface is adapted for receiving the second information from different people at different times and from different places, such that the at least one display is based on the second information from the different people.

744. The computer program product as recited in claim 743, wherein the application is capable of being executed using the system and the system is capable of: (i) retrieving stored information; (ii) receiving user information; and (iii) processing the stored information and the user information for generating output of the processing; where one or more of (i)-(iii) is carried out in association with, at least in part, one or more modules that is operable such that the one or more of (i)-(iii) are capable of being purposed differently.

745. The computer program product as recited in claim 744, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the one or more of (i)-(iii) are capable of being purposed differently, by applying the one or more of (i)-(iii) to different products.

746. The computer program product as recited in claim 744, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the one or more of (i)-(iii) are capable of being purposed differently, by applying the one or more of (i)-(iii) to products associated with different businesses.

747. The computer program product as recited in claim 744, wherein the computer program product is operable such that the one or more of (i)-(iii) are capable of being purposed differently, by applying the one or more of (i)-(iii) to products associated with different business sectors.

748. The computer program product as recited in claim 744, wherein the computer program product includes computer code having a plurality of objects associated with an object-oriented programming language.

749. The computer program product as recited in claim 744, wherein the at least one user interface is implemented utilizing dynamic web pages.

750. The computer program product as recited in claim 742, wherein the collaborative decision-making is facilitated utilizing platform means for supporting the collaborative decision-making in a collaborative manner.

751. The computer program product as recited in claim 742, wherein the collaborative decision-making is facilitated utilizing means for collaborative decision-making.

752. The computer program product as recited in claim 742, wherein the collaborative decision-making is facilitated utilizing a platform including module means for supporting collaborative decision-making.

753. The computer program product as recited in claim 742, wherein the collaborative decision-making is facilitated utilizing a collaborative platform including at least one module for supporting the collaborative decision-making in a manner that is, at least in part, universal when applied for different purposes.

754. The computer program product as recited in claim 742, wherein the collaborative decision-making includes collaborative decision-making that is facilitated utilizing a platform including at least one module for supporting the decision-making in a manner that is, at least in part, universal when applied differently by the platform.

755. The computer program product as recited in claim 742, wherein at least a portion of the computer code is carried out using modules capable of interfacing with different applications adapted for applying the modules differently.

756. The computer program product as recited in claim 742, wherein at least a portion of the computer code is carried out using universal modules capable of interfacing with different applications adapted for applying the universal modules differently.

757. The computer program product as recited in claim 742, wherein the computer program product includes an asynchronous framework operable such that the at least one user interface is capable of asynchronously receiving the second information from different people, such that contents of the at least one display is based on the second information from the different people.

758. The computer program product as recited in claim 742, wherein the computer program product includes an asynchronous framework operable such that the at least one user interface is capable of asynchronously receiving the second information from different people, such that contents of the at least one display is based on the second information from the different people; the asynchronous framework further operable to iteratively repeat a framing process.

759. The computer program product as recited in claim 742, wherein the computer program product includes an asynchronous framework operable such that the at least one user interface is capable of asynchronously receiving the second information from different people, such that contents of the at least one display is based on the second information from the different people; the asynchronous framework further operable such that the at least one user interface is capable of asynchronously receiving modified second information from the different people, such that the contents of the at least one display is modified based on the modified second information from the different people.

760. A system, comprising:

collaborative decision means for facilitating decision-making in association with an application which is a real estate-related application, a medical-related application, a corporate-related application, a product supply-related application, a service supply-related application, or a financial-related application;

means for retrieving first information from a memory; and

means for receiving second information via a web page constructed utilizing a hypertext markup language;

wherein the system is operable to cause generation of at least one display based on the first information and the second information, the display facilitating the decision-making by including at least one of a potential feasible hybrid theme, a decision sensitivity display, or a decision hierarchy display.

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